

PSM

100% independent PlayStation Magazine

PlayStation's LAST FINAL FANTASY

It broke sales records in Japan,
and now FFX is heading our way!

- ▶ First Impressions: The best ever?
- ▶ Tons of exclusive new Screens
- ▶ Square interview & New Features

SPECIAL FEATURE

Why PS2 WILL DESTROY
Dreamcast, X-Box & Dolphin

PS2 News:

- ▶ DDA2: Hardcore
- ▶ Arcade PS2
- ▶ Robotech on PS2

HOT for PlayStation:

- ▶ Parasite Eve 2
- ▶ Madden 2001
- ▶ Spyro 3
- ▶ Mega Man X5

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WELCOME!



The world's top RPG series is calling it quits on PlayStation, but it's going out with a bang!

When I think of what Square has accomplished with *Final Fantasy* on the PlayStation, it blows my mind. The series was already a hit in Japan where RPGs have ruled for years, but it wasn't until the PS that *FF* reached a similar level of success worldwide.

Now, after three classic titles, the PlayStation chapter of the *Final Fantasy* saga is nearing its end. I'm excited to see *FFX* and *XI* on PS2, but a part of me is also a little sad to see this era end.

Well, I can't get too misty-eyed yet, because I've still got *FFX* to play! From what I've seen so far, it's much funnier and faster-paced than the last two, which has got me really excited. I can't wait for the English translation!

So, enjoy this issue's *FFX* coverage, and the other cool stuff we've packed into this issue!

► Chris Slate, HP: 100 / MP: 50

RPG FIGHTIN'



THIS MONTH'S COVER

We take pride in having quality original artwork to present our magazine at the highest possible level.

Right from the start, we knew that Arthur Adams was the perfect choice to do this month's cover. Why? Aside from his incredible talent, Art illustrated the *Final Fantasy VII* cover for our very first issue. Plus, his amazing rendition of *FFVII's* Squall for our Top 10 Character feature last issue left us drooling to see more — and we certainly weren't disappointed! So, thanks again for an amazing job, Art! You rule!



Art's first sketch was right on the money — the whole gang is there in full glory, with plenty of room left on the left for text. The *Bastille* looks a bit squished from being boxed, though.



Here's the colored image, but without a background. We weren't sure if we'd use a background or not, so it was done on a different layer so that it could be easily removed.



The final colored image, with a background. As a word picture it looks better with a background, but as this is being written, a final decision hasn't been made as to which version will appear on the cover.

PSM
PlayStation Magazine

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國際網

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MEET THE PSM TEAM:



CHRIS SLATE
Editor-in-Chief

Likes: All types of games.
Hobbies: Comics, hoops, J-Pop
What's the coolest magic item you own? I've got a +10 basketball that has an extra 10% chance of going in! But, so keep that between us, okay?



Likes: Fighting Games, RPGs
Hobbies: Cleaning CDs
What's the coolest magic item you own? Well, that would have to be my special CD cleaner that changes really bad games into good ones.



RANDY NELSON
News Editor

Likes: Shooters, Racing, Platform
Hobbies: WWE, Action Figures
What's the coolest magic item you own? Definitely my Bag of Invisibile Thumbtacks. You should see the guys when they try and sit down around here. What a hoot!



Likes: ALL GAMES!!!
Hobbies: Games and GAMES!
What's the coolest magic item you own? I've got the world's only working pair of X-Ray glasses. I can spend all day in Grays just watching kawaii girls shop for clothes!



What he does: Screams about deadlines and at the writers who mess them.

What's the coolest magic item you own? When I was younger, I had one of those Magic 8 Balls. I'd ask a question, and it would give me a funny answer. However, now that I'm older, I usually just do what it says.

Bill's Quote of the Month: "Stop screaming, ladies! The Magic 8 Ball said to come in here. Yes, it also said to take off all my clothes."



What he does: Seethes. (I asked Eug about this answer, but he just sat there, staring at me and um... seething... Ed.)

What's the coolest magic item you own? My bottomless cup of coffee. It sounds great, and it is for the most part, but the downside is that it usually gets knocked over on my desk, leading to brown-wrinkled copies of PSM and Cat Fancy.

Eug's Quote of the Month:
Clean up on aisle 1.



What he does:
Ensures FSM will have the best looking pages ever!

What's the coolest magic item you own?
I am the mystical owner of the Magic Metal Water Snake. I know you are being amazed, but when I pull on his wings, he sprays water! It will be hot or cold, depending on which wing I pull. 'Too bad only I can have one in my kitchen and not you!

Gary's Quote of the Month:
Hot AND cold AIEEE!

PSM IS 100% INDEPENDENT

Sa, which magazine is best for you, Official or Unofficial? That's easy. You want independent, unbiased coverage, and you want to know that what you're reading is nothing but the truth. You can only get this with an UN-official magazine. An official book has to answer its Corporate Sponsor. And whose best interests do you think they're looking out for?



PSM is created by us and no one else.
Nobody has to approve our pages before

they're printed and nobody, not anybody, can make us say what we don't believe to be true. We write about what we want to and put what we want on our cover.

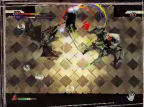
This is the kind of honest, straightforward coverage that you can only get with an unofficial magazine. We understand that our readers came first, and we would never, EVER betray your trust. This is our promise to you, the hard-core PlayStation gamer, who deserves nothing less.

12090 a.d.

10,000 years have passed since the final war brought the history of the human race to its end. Since that time, vampires have reigned over the world. But now they are dying as a species—this is their final hour. The humans are regaining their power after many long dark years. However, some vampires remain in the remote region and continue their horrific attacks against humans. Such action has brought about the hiring of bounty hunters to destroy them. Among these hunters, the Dunpeals, half vampire and half human, are considered the finest. In time, people began to talk about a hunter with remarkable skills...

That hunter is D... Vampire Hunter D...

The adventure begins...



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VAMPIRE HUNTER



Armored Core 2

► pg. 46 ◀

Although mech games have never received a popular following in the U.S., From Software may gain a few fans when it releases its mech game this fall. If the already crisp graphics don't attract gamers, Armored Core 2's fast-paced gameplay will. The heavy metal rocks on page 46.



Dynasty Warriors 2

► pg. 36 ◀

Set in ancient China during the same time period as the Romance of the Three Kingdoms series, Dynasty Warriors 2 puts you directly into the field of battle as one of nine legendary Chinese warriors, responsible for aiding in your kingdom's victory. Your forces await you on page 36!



BACK IN ANCIENT CHINA, US HOT BABES HAD TO DEFEND THE LAND WITH NOTHING BUT OUR SWORDS AND CLEAVAGE.

Midnight Club

► pg. 41 ◀

Midnight Racer hopes to blow past its stiff competition to be the top racer on the PlayStation2. Although surpassing hit franchises like Ridge Racer and Gran Turismo will be quite a task, Midnight Club includes a few elements that set it apart from the rest. Your sweet ride is parked over on page 41!

VROOM!



THIS TIME, IT'S FOR PINK SLIPS!

YOU WANT THIS WATCHBACK, YOU CAN HAVE IT.

COVER STORY

FINAL FANTASY IX

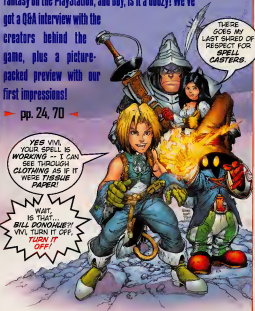
The RPG of the year is here! Square has given us one last Final Fantasy on the PlayStation, and boy, is it a doozy! We've got a Q&A interview with the creators behind the game, plus a picture-packed preview with our first impressions!

► pg. 24, 70 ◀

YES VIVI, YOUR SPELL IS WORKING -- I CAN SEE THROUGH CLOTHING AS IF IT WERE TISSUE PAPER!

WAIT, IS THAT... BILL DONDALIE?! VIVI, TURN IT OFF, TURN IT OFF!

THERE GOES MY LAST SHRED OF RESPECT FOR SPELL CASTERS.



Motor Mayhem

► pg. 44 ◀

There still hasn't been any word of a PlayStation2 version of either Twisted Metal or Vigilante 8, which is kind of disappointing. However, that doesn't mean the console won't have a car combat title in the near future. Don't try crossing page 44 without looking both ways!





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code junkies

The latest codes for all you addicts

letters

You've got questions, we've got answers

Spyro: Year Of The Dragon

▶ pg. 76

Who would've thought that a little dragon who can barely fly would complete his first adventure, let alone go on to star in two sequels? Now on his third outing, Spyro has a much larger world to explore and new tasks to complete. The adventure begins on page 76!



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▶ pg. 105

A sneak-peek at what's gonna be hot for next month



Parasite Eve 2

▶ pg. 78

SOMETHING'S MISSING HERE, BUT I CAN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON IT... AND WHY IS IT SO COLD?

The NVC's are airborne! Once this deadly virus enters the body, it begins mutating the organism's DNA, which alters the animal into a monster. Although many monsters are mutated beyond recognition, it appears that everything from people to elephants make an appearance in Parasite Eve 2. The mutations are gathering on page 78.

MTV Sports Pure Ride

▶ pg. 83

Why just snowboard down a mountain, when you can build the mountain first and then slide down it? The extreme action begins on page 83!

CHECK IT OUT - PEOPLE'S EYEBROW! AM I TOTALLY AWESOME OR WHAT?



ANarchy



Rob VAN DAM

I will not conform to your rules.

Not in the ring. Not out of it.

The weak obey the law. I break it.

I do not believe in mercy.

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[illegible]

MONITOR

your complete source for all the latest in
playstation news, topics, and 32-bit culture

FIRST NEWS: Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore

The full scoop on Tecmo's new US-only version of its sizzling PS2 fighter, straight from the man who's creating it

Released just after the system's launch in Japan, the PlayStation2 version of Tecmo's eye-popping arcade fighter, *Dead or Alive 2*, arrived bearing new stages and other PS2-exclusive features not found in the co-op. Rather than simply re-release the version overseas, however, Tecmo has announced that an entirely new US-only game, entitled *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*, will make its premiere just shortly after PS2 hits shelves here at the end of October.

In addition to a completely rewritten graphics engine designed to take full advantage of PS2, Tecmo promises that the game will boast a number of new features not seen in the Japanese release or the Dreamcast version. To find out exactly what we can expect from the game, we spoke with its lead designer, Team Ninja chief Tomonobu Itagaki, who gave us the low-down on his latest creation.



Tomonobu Itagaki, head of Tecmo's elite Team Ninja, is currently working on *Ninja Gaiden* for PS3 in addition to *DOA2: Hardcore*.

PSM: Will all of the new elements and special effects that you originally wanted to include in the Japanese version of *DOA2* for PS2 make it into *DOA2: Hardcore*? Can you list all of the new elements you're planning to include in the game?

Itagaki: Definitely, yes. Since the release of *Dead or Alive 2* on PS2 in Japan and Dreamcast in the U.S., I've received much feedback from the fans of *DOA2*. I've personally reviewed this feedback to gain ideas for improving *DOA2: Hardcore* for the U.S. market. We're basically rebuilding this game from ground up.

Here is everything that I'm planning to include in the game at the moment:

- A newly developed graphics engine. This results in a great improvement in the graphic quality that is different from the Japanese version.
- Voiceovers recorded by American voice talents.
- A new intro movie.
- A new ending movie for Story Mode.
- New costumes.
- New fighting arenas and improved existing ones.
- New attacks.
- A "real ending" will be added at the end of Story Mode, when the player succeeds in clearing all stages with all available characters.
- New play modes.

PSM: Since the game has "hardcore" in the title, does this mean we can expect it to feature any of the more "mature" elements censored out of the U.S. version of *DOA2* for Dreamcast? Can we expect the female fighters to be even more "bouncy" than in earlier versions?

Itagaki: I can't say that there will be more "mature" elements. But the better visuals and controls will translate to more a realistic look and feel of the *DOA2: Hardcore* girls. Do you want more "bounciness"? I think that the current versions have just the right amount of bounce, that is, if you're talking about silicon implants. Besides, I want you to concentrate on the fight, not on other "things."

PSM: Can we expect any new characters to make an appearance? Will we finally get to play as the evil Tengu? How about characters from other Tecmo games?

Itagaki: I wish I could tell you all about my secret plans, but I can't that everything you've mentioned is possible.

PSM: Will you now be able to play on any background in the tag battle mode?

Itagaki: So many of my fans have requested that I can't tell you for certain if we can do it but it would be really cool to be able to play tag battle on multiple stages.

PSM: How much of the new rendering engine has been coded from scratch, and what exactly can it do that the old one couldn't? Will the game use PS2's anti-aliasing functions, for instance?

Itagaki: Whenever Team Ninja works on a different version of a game, I take the game apart completely and rebuild it from scratch. It's kind of like rebuilding a Formula 1 car after each race to make adjustments and improvements to make the car faster. I'm very aware of the anti-aliasing issue and I will do everything necessary to address the issue.

These days, daily news is only a click away on the Internet. But what you *can't* get online is PSM's exclusive in-depth coverage, with more details and extra info. We dig deep to find the *real* story behind the headlines.



PSM: What about new story sequences? Will we finally get to learn more about the characters?

Itagaki: My Japanese *DOA2* fans are totally fascinated with the story of the *DOA2* characters. I'm hoping to do the same with my American fans with *DOA2: Hardcore*. Yes, there will be more cinema modes to let you understand the extraordinary story of *DOA2*.

PSM: Now that you've spent a good deal of time developing for PS2, have you discovered anything new about the system you didn't know it could do before, or ways to overcome the hurdles you experienced when developing the Japanese version of *DOA2*? Has your overall opinion of the hardware's capabilities changed at all?

Itagaki: I really never had any problems with development, aside from never having enough time to perfect a game. (Of course, any developer who says they reached perfection has a problem!) *DOA2: Hardcore* will be one of the few PS2 titles to be developed on the DVD format. Actually, the DVD format not only increases storage capacity, but with a proper programming technique, will increase the visual quality and gameplay over CD-ROM format games. This will be quite apparent when you compare Tekken Tag Tournament (CD-ROM) with *DOA2: Hardcore* (DVD).

Sounds great! We'll have more info on *DOA2: Hardcore* as its release draws closer!

A: The new stages added for the Japanese release (shown) will be present, as will some all-new arenas to fight in. According to Tecmo, the existing stages will also all be enhanced in some way.

Let me just say



A: The Japanese version of *DOA2* (shown here) looked great, and Itagaki promises that *DOA2: Hardcore* will look even better, thanks to a new graphics engine.

Robotech Resurrected

The cult favorite animated series is making a comeback, this time on consoles

Blasting onto the airwaves back in 1985, *Robotech* revolutionized the world of after-school cartoons by bringing Japanese anime into the mainstream. An absolute epic as far as animated series were concerned, it spawned three separate series and some 85 episodes that including the never-ended three episode follow-up, *The Sentinels*. It also pretty much wrote the book on transforming mechs (giant robot) combat, something that has had fans clamoring for a videogame adaptation of the various series for more than a decade.

Enter Mattel Interactive, which recently snapped up the rights to produce games based on all three *Robotech* series (*The Macross Saga*, *Southern Cross*, and *The New Generation*) for PC and "undiscovered" consoles (which, we've been assured, will almost certainly include PS2). Details concerning what type of game for games to expect when they begin arriving late next year weren't available at the time of the announcement, so we got in touch with Mattel Interactive's Charles Harbrey, a self-confessed fan of the series and the man who's been charged with making the game(s) a reality, to see what we could find out.

PSM: Since you're such a big fan of the series, you've obviously had a lot of time to think about what type of game you'd make based on the *Robotech* universe. How do you see the game shaping up?

Charles Harbrey: While I cannot give specifics on our concepts, I can tell you that they capture the heart of what makes *Robotech* compelling. I wouldn't do it if I wasn't going to do it right.

Sony Announces PlayStation2-based Arcade Hardware

Can Tekken 4 be far behind?

Arcade junkies will no doubt be familiar with the various arcade-based incarnations of the original PlayStation hardware, most prominently the System 11 and 12 boards used by Namco for such games as *Tekken 3* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*. Recently, Sony made the inevitable announcement in Japan concerning an arcade version of the

By the end of 2001, arcade games running on enhanced PlayStation2 hardware should be popping up quarters across the country.

PSM: Do you see it being set in the *Macross* Saga sense timeframe? It would be great to see elements from *Southern Cross* (hover bikes/tanks), *New Generation* (Alpha fighters and riding armor), and even the *Sentinels* be incorporated into subsequent games, if not in this one.



CH: The *Macross* segment of *Robotech* certainly seems to be the most popular and with good reason. However, *Robotech* is much more than just *Macross*. The fact that *Macross* is fantastic, and yet only a portion of the universe, is one of the things that makes *Robotech* so interesting. It would be safe to assume that we will start with *Macross*. Though like the series, *Macross* is really just the first act.

PSM: Any chance that the original voice actors from the various TV series will lend their talents to the game(s)?

CH: There is a strong possibility that the original characters from the series will appear in the games. If so, then the best thing to do would be to get the original voice actors to reprise their roles.

PSM: There have been attempts in the past to bring *Robotech* to consoles in the U.S. (*Robotech: Crystal Dreams* for Nintendo 64, for instance) but they've never actually seen release. What're your thoughts as to why it's been so hard to make this thing a reality, and how will you set about making it one?

CH: The scale of *Robotech* is beyond epic. Three generations, each with unique characters, vehicles and stories. Battles with not dozens, but hundreds or thousands of participants. In order to pull that off, you need clear game concepts and the resources to develop those concepts. We have both. In addition, until now, the technology really has not been there to deliver the definitive *Robotech* gaming experience. Console and PC technology has finally gotten to the point, whereas we have the ability to surpass the original material in almost every way.

PlayStation2 hardware, simply dubbed PS2A (for "arcade"), and developers are already reported to be receiving development software to begin coding games for the system.

It's unknown at this time which companies have taken possession of development kits, but it's safe to assume that the heavy hitters such as Namco and Capcom were among the first in line. That said, we're hopefully one big step toward long-awaited games such as *Tekken 4* finally seeing the light of day. In fact, rumors are already beginning to surface that Namco is planning *Soul Calibur 2* for the PS2A architecture (and, presumably, PS2).

There's been no indication as to when we can expect to see PS2A games start popping up at local arcades, but it's hopefully by soon. We'll continue to keep you updated when it comes to new PS2A developments — for now, scope out the tech specs below, and start saving your quarters.

PS2A Tech Specs

- Storage: CD-ROM, DVD-ROM
- I/O Buffer Memory: 32MB (expandable to 64MB)
- System Memory: 256MB
- Performance: Same as PS2 console, minus DVD playback
- LINK x 1
- USB x 2
- Memory Card Slot x 1

NOTES

Here are a few other notes of interest, including the latest up-to-the-minute information on everything PlayStation.

In order to address the ability to play DVD movies from any version on the first run of PlayStation2 consoles in Japan, Sony Computer Entertainment has begun shipping a new version of the system overseas. During the model number SCPH-15000, the new machine also incorporates security measures against the installation of PS2 mod chips that have started cropping up in Asia. Despite these changes, the newly revised PS2 will carry a retail price of \$3,600 (or roughly \$300).

At least 80 of SNK's development staff have jumped ship to Capcom, including members of the team responsible for the popular *King of Fighters* fighting game series. These staffers will form a whole new division of Capcom devoted to developing 2D games, presumably for all platform, including PlayStation2. We'll have more information as it becomes available.

In addition to *Herb's Quick Project Eden: Legacy of Eden*, *Soul Reaver 2*, *Phantasyline*, and a new *Lord Ruler* game, Eden has showed up its support for PlayStation2 with the announcement of three more games for the system. First off is *Rage Effect 2*, the sequel to last year's popular adventure game. *Rage Effect: Retro War* is a prequel, technically. Also in the works is *Blood Queen 2*, the sequel to the original *Blood Queen*. *Legacy of Love* More currently, it seems that *Commander 2*, the company's detailed military action game, is also destined for the system. Both games are due to hit during

Square's latest *Final Fantasy* game has seen phenomenal success in Japan. More than 12 million copies of the game had been pre-ordered prior to FFR's July 7 release in Japan, and a whopping 2.8 million copies were sold in total on the first day.

Best known for its high-end home theater products, Monster Cable will be introducing a new line of cables and accessories for use with the PlayStation2 alongside the system this October. Among the custom products to expect are S-Video, component video, and digital optical cords designed with extra high-quality 24K gold connectors for what should hopefully be the best picture and sound quality possible from the system.

P

Game Soundtracks Go Mainstream

Square and Capcom tunes coming soon to a store near you

In Japan, where videogaming is as much a part of everyday life as movies, music, and television, game soundtracks have been as commonplace as their film industry counterparts for decades now. On the side of the Pacific, however, they've been rarities, often (if ever) relegated to the import bins at larger record shops. If companies such as Mats Colony Music and TokyoPOP/Max Entertainment have their way, that won't be the case much longer.

Mats Colony Music recently released *Resident Evil: Orchestra Album*, a \$16.99 disc featuring select tracks from all three PlayStation *RE* games performed by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, which should be available at your local record shop (or via the



Final Fantasy IX and Resident Evil are just two of the big-name properties to see their soundtracks released in the US this year.



Internet) as you read this. Through an exclusive agreement with Square, TokyoPOP/Max Entertainment will release the *Parasite Eve 2 Original Soundtrack* in September, followed by *FFIX: Music From The Final Fantasy IX Video Game* in November (presumably to coincide with the speculated release date for the game). Pricing information and exact dates for these discs had yet to be finalized as of press time.

The sales of these soundtracks, particularly *FFIX*, could very well have a big impact on the release of future videogame music discs into the mainstream marketplace stateside. Needless to say, we'll be watching how they do very closely and will bring you word of further releases as they're announced.

PS2's Expanding Horizons

USB-based modem and printer showcased in Japan

During its first annual PlayStation2 Middleware Expo, held on June 21-23 in Japan, Sony Computer Entertainment demonstrated support for several USB-based expansion devices utilizing drivers developed by its middleware partners.

The most intriguing of these was a prototype 56k analog modem with associated web-browsing and email software. Sony has still not announced whether it will market the modem and Internet connection software itself, or if we can expect third-party peripheral companies to deliver the goods. Nor was a timetable announced for the peripheral's introduction. Also demonstrated were drivers to enable the connection of USB-based inkjet printers to PS2, one of the many applications of which being the ability to print out email and other documents downloaded over the Internet. As with the modem, there was no mention of when we might see these drivers put to use.

PSM has learned from industry sources that at least one unnamed peripheral manufacturer is planning to have a third-party USB-based modem and necessary Internet software ready to go for PS2's launch.

In October. Combined with the fact that some games (such as Infogrames' *Unreal Tournament*) may support modem play, this points toward the possibility that we could be playing PS2 games online sooner than originally thought. In any event, we'll continue to keep you updated with the latest on this front.



While the modem was hidden from view, you could still surf the Web (in this case, Yahoo!) via PS2 at the middleware expo.

Sneak Preview: Legend of Dragoon Toys

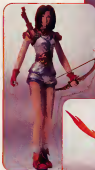
The cast of Sony's new RPG epic go plastic

The number of videogame spin-off toys continues to grow at a breakneck pace here in the States. Sony's recently released epic RPG, *Legend of Dragoon*, serves as the base for the latest action figures from Blue Box Toys, the company responsible for this summer's *Omega Boost* and *Fighting Force* lines.

BBT provided us with an advance look at the figures, which are slated to hit store shelves this fall, and they're easily some of the best-looking "mainstream" videogame toys we've seen in a while. With each figure expected to ring in at around the same price as the *Omega Boost* and *Fighting Force* toys (read: about \$10 each), the line will include six characters: Dart, Shera, Ravitz, Rose, Kongol, and Lloyd.

As for how accurately you'll be able to pose the plasticized *Legend of Dragoon* cast, BBT's newly-coined "Smart Move Articulation" seems to mean that most of their major joints will be movable, sans the elbows on one of two figures. Regardless, that's still a lot better than most figures (or should we say statues?) released nowadays.

Fans of the game will definitely want to keep an eye out for these highly detailed figures. We'll continue to bring you the latest on other upcoming videogame toys lines as they're announced.



Clockwise from left: Shera, Kongol, Ravitz, Dart, Rose, and Lloyd — the *Legend of Dragoon* crew, now in plastic form.



Nobody gets **Bouncer** before we do.

Nobody gets
Final Fantasy IX before we do.

Nobody gets
Tekken Tag Tournament before we do.

Nobody gets
Dark Cloud before we do.

Nobody gets
Gran Turismo 2000 before we do.

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Beats, a new breed of a new breed. With the best of both worlds, and the great new one. But this beat change, when he came a great new one. Beats, as the winner of the best of both worlds.

Kickin' Booty Never Looked This Good

"One of the first PS2 games ever revealed to the public, **The Bouncer** is a gorgeous beat-'em-up title that was responsible for creating huge expectations around Sony's new system. Get ready for a cinematic action experience like no other. Battle through the mean streets of the future within amazingly realistic, interactive environments like you have never experienced before. An incredible storyline and visuals await those who cross into the Dog Street." — DailyRadar.com



PlayStation 2



Machine: PS2 Publisher: SquareSoft
Genre: Action # of Players: 1
Release date: November, 2000



The real-time action is incredibly impressive.



Prescribed sequences flow seamlessly in and out of the action.



Bombers, mutants and magic highlight this inspired fighter.

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Use the Combat Cables from Mad Catz to link two PlayStations for head-to-head competition.

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More Mystery, Magic, And Sleepless Nights

"Final Fantasy IX is the final game in the series to appear on the PlayStation console. It is a return to the days of medieval knights black images. Some people have complained about the futuristic themes of Final Fantasy VII & VIII, but with Final Fantasy IX, they'll have nothing to complain about anymore. Join Zidane, Vivi, and the rest of



the crew on this grand adventure!"

— DailyRadar.com

FINAL FANTASY IX



Return to a world filled with mystery and magic for the biggest adventure yet.



The ninth installment of this best-selling RPG series has a completely new look and feel.



An amazing visual, audio, and gameplay experience for any brave enough to enter.



Save game positions and customize controller settings with the PlayStation memory card.



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TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

TM

Calling For Your Mommy Is Not An Option

PlayStation.2



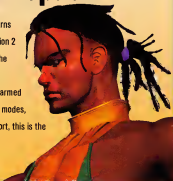
Available on PS2 PlayStation Network
Genre: Fighting # of Players: 1-4
Release dates September, 2000

namco

"The #1 fighting game series of all time returns with a vengeance on the power-laden PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Featuring the all-new TAG Battle System for the ultimate onslaught of moves and combos. 34 fighters armed with new surprises up their sleeves. 7 grade modes, plus hidden modes as well. In short, this is the must-have title of the year."



— DailyRadar.com



Choose from 34 characters throughout the Tekken series.



A special tag-team mode creates new combinations of attacking never before possible.



State-of-the-art design and technology add incredible realism.

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The Magic Carpet Ride Of A Lifetime



"Get ready! This incredible new release for the PlayStation 2 will amaze you.

Dark Cloud's true-to-life graphics, easy gameplay and smooth animations are unmatched. This fresh game promises to deliver what you crave — strategy, battles and puzzles. In addition, you can create geographical landscapes using the new Georama feature system.

Dark Cloud is definitely a game you'll want to explore!" — **DailyRadar.com**



PlayStation.2



DARK CLOUD

Machine: PS2 Publisher: Sony
Genre: RPG # of Players: 1
Release date: Fall, 2000



You might think it's the most incredibly ill RPG ever.



Create geographic landscapes using the new Georama feature system.



A wide variety of creative characters will round out the party.

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**Prima
Strategy Guide**
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**DARK
CLOUD**

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**CAUTION: Objects
Are Moving Faster
Than They Appear**



"Jump behind the wheel of over 500 amazing cars and get ready for the ride of your life. Gran Turismo 2000 truly is a visual masterpiece enhanced by the power of the new PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. And talk about feeling the need for speed! With the Dual Shock 2 analog controller, you feel the power of the

game just like you would the acceleration of a real car."

— DailyRadar.com



Using the calculation power of the PlayStation 2, the physics model is identical to that of a real car.



Feel the speed as you maneuver through curves and shoot down straight aways.



Environment mapping creates broadcast quality graphics that blur the line between game and reality.



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GOSSIP

You want more than just the latest headlines—you want the dirt, the inside scoop on what's *really* going on with the PlayStation. Look no further, because PSM always has its ear to the wall...

Ape Escape For PS2?

This could be the news fans of Sony's marvellous monkey-hunting platformer have been waiting for. While not official, rumors have begun to trickle out of Japan that work is already underway on a sequel to Ape Escape, and that it's destined for PlayStation2.

Sony's world-wide branches are keeping tight-lipped concerning the possibility that the game does indeed exist, but representatives have teased at its likelihood just a little by offering coy "it's not out of the question" responses. Whether development of the game would be handled by the original team is in question, as the original's executive producer,

Shuhei Yoshida, was recently named the head of internal development at Sony Computer Entertainment America.

One factor working in favor of the sequel is the fact that PS2 comes with a Dual Shock controller, which will help it reach a wider audience than the first.

Ape Escape earned second place in our All-Time Top 25 Games feature in issue #34, so its sequel will have a lot to live up to.



PS2 Backwards Compatibility Boost?

Just when we thought we'd heard about all of the hardware features PlayStation2 has to offer, word from the development community seems to suggest that the best is yet to come—at least when PS2's backwards compatibility with original PlayStation games is concerned.

According to specifications provided to developers, it appears as if PS2 will be able to run lower PS1 games in full 640x480 high-resolution mode, perhaps with a future upgrade to the PlayStation driver that comes loaded onto the system.



Unfortunately, any information as to how this would work is available only to licensed developers, so there's little chance of learning more about it until Sony is ready to make an official announcement.

There's also the issue of compatibility. As it stands, some PS1 games just won't work if faster drive access is enabled in PS2's PlayStation driver. There's a chance that boosting the resolution of PlayStation games might introduce more compatibility problems, and Sony could be trying to iron this out before introducing the feature. As for how you'd go about upgrading your PlayStation driver, we've heard that as part of their license to develop on PS2, companies are required to place updated drivers on all of their games as they're made available by Sony, and that these will be copied over your old versions without you needing to do a thing.

So, might not be seeing this newly discovered "feature" anytime soon, but it's definitely there, and could make a world of difference when it comes to playing your old PS1 titles.

PS1 games already look a little better on PS2, but if Sony actually takes advantage of the system's ability to boost their resolution, they'll look out of this world.

A Marvel-ous Rumor

Capcom fighting game fans will want to sit up and take notice at this rumor. Reports out of Japan suggest that the company is planning to bring Marvel vs. Capcom 2 to PlayStation2, and that it'll be a lot more than a simple port of its arcade and Dreamcast counterparts.

Specifically, the rumors indicate that we can expect the game's character roster to jump from 56 to somewhere in the 70s. That means there'd be at least 14 new characters, and they'd be entirely new to the series, since all of the Versus game characters are represented in MVC2.

Word on the rest of the features to be expected from this potential port have yet to surface, but if this initial info is any indication, there should be a lot to look forward to. We'll keep you posted with the latest, so sit tight.

> If you like last-paced fighters, Marvel vs. Capcom 2 is the reigning champ. If rumors hold true, it'll be on PS2 before the end of the year in Japan.



DMA to Become a Repeat Offender?

Whether you like playing on the other side of the law or not, DMA Design's Grand Theft Auto is a bona fide best-seller the world over. Having already spawned one sequel, indicators are that the series will soon gain a new installment for PlayStation2.

Details are still sketchy, but rumor has it that the working title for the game is GTA3D, thus implying a Diverstyle fully-realized city setting for the game. And since it's being deployed with 3D in mind, it's safe to assume that the level of realism (traffic levels, pedestrian traffic, physics, and effects) in the game world can

and hopefully will be closer to life than ever before.

Neither DMA nor US rights holder Rockstar have officially confirmed that the game is in development, but we'll keep you abreast of any new developments as they surface.

> Grand Theft Auto became a hit for letting gamers explore the other side of the law, and now there's a chance that fully 3D sequel will grace PS2.



Tekken Tag and Others Enhanced for U.S. Release?



> The shimmering effect in Ridge Racer V can now be taken care of thanks to anti-aliasing. Let's hope Namco implements it for the US release!

Since last issue, the "dreaded" problem of aliasing (or "jaggies") in PS2 games has thankfully been put to rest by Sony, who has begun providing information to developers on how to implement full anti-aliasing in their upcoming games. But what about those games that've already "finished"—i.e. out in Japan and headed to the US for PS2's launch this fall?

The good news is that, according to development sources, anti-aliasing can be implemented in finished games as easily as it can be for works-in-progress. It's just a simple matter of taking apart the game program, adding in the lines of code to do it, and then recompiling the game. This means that games such as Tekken Tag Tournament, Ridge Racer V, and others could potentially get a noticeable boost for US release. As it stands, however, neither Namco nor any other developer has confirmed that their games will take advantage of this "revolution," but we'll keep you posted.

Most games currently in development for the US launch, however, are expected to boast full anti-aliasing now that Sony has delivered the goods on how it makes it work.

Q&A

Recently, we had to a chance to sit down and chat with two of the key members of the Final Fantasy IX development team, Hironobu Sakaguchi and Shinji Hashimoto. Together, the two provided valuable insight on one of the most anticipated RPGs of this year. Here's what they had to say.



◀ In the beginning of the game, Zidane Tribal runs away with the princess Garnet.

back to the original idea. Both FFXII and FFXIII take place on cyber worlds/universes, so we wanted to create some kind of medieval universe using the technologies applied in FFXII and FFXIII.

PSM: How much FMV is in the game, compared to the past sequels on the PlayStation?

SQ: Like FFXII, I believe there is a little under one hour of FMV.

Game Features

PSM: How is the game structure in FFXIX different from FFXII and VII? What new features have been added?

SQ: The biggest departure from FFXII and FFXIII is that FFXIX brings back the fantasy setting from earlier Final Fantasy games. Although not explicitly stated in the game, each character in FFXIX has a job class, which is also similar to the earlier games.

PSM: Specifically, could you please talk about changes to the combat system, such as how Guardian

Magic, Steal, White Magic, and Summon. These abilities use MP. Support abilities assist characters in battle with skills like Auto-Regen, Auto-Potion, and Chameleon. Both types of abilities are learned by equipping items and acquiring AP in battle. For support abilities, once they are learned, they must be equipped by using Magic Stones, which are also received from battle. Characters can go into Trance after repeated physical attacks from enemies. When the Trance gauge, located below the ATB gauge, reaches maximum capacity, the character will go into Trance. Commands change and attacks become more powerful during Trance. Up to four people can be in the active party. Guardian Forces are called Eddies in FFXIX. They are called in battle using the Summon command. Many of the Guardian Forces in FFXIX return in FFXIX, including Shiva, Ifrit, Odin, Leviathan, Bahamut, Carbuncle.

PSM: What other changes are there in the combat system?

SQ: In FFXIX, you can position your characters in the front or back row in battle.

"THIS IS THE LAST OF THE FINAL FANTASIES WITH A SINGLE DIGIT AND WE WANTED TO GO BACK TO THE ORIGINAL IDEA."



Forces work now? Are the summoned monsters still called Guardian Forces? Will a majority of the GFs in FFXIX return in this game?

SQ: The combat system in FFXIX is a wonderful fusion of the past FF combat systems. FFXIX uses the ATB Active Time Battle system, like VII and VIII. Each character learns abilities and commands appropriate to his or her job class. There are two major ability types: action abilities and support abilities. Action abilities are commands like Block

will not be able to use magic.

PSM: Have you incorporated user feedback from the last two games?

SQ: Yes, to some extent.

PSM: What is the main theme to the story in FFXIX?

SQ: What is the meaning of life?

PSM: What sort of vehicles can we expect to see in the game?

SQ: There are actually several different vehicles.

Airship: Airships allow you to fly anywhere in the world.

Ship: When airships are not available, you can travel across the ocean on an ordinary ship.

Chocobo: A chocobo named Choco allows you to travel the world without encountering enemies. At first, Choco can only travel over land, but if you raise him properly, he can carry you over water and through the air as well.

Gargant: Gargants are giant bugs that you can ride to travel quickly through underground caverns.

PSM: What role will Chocobo play in FFXIX?

SQ: Chocobos are a form of transportation, just like in any other FF game. You can also raise and evolve a chocobo by playing a mini-game called "Chocobo Hot & Cold." This mini-game leads to a major side-quest involving a chocobo, so don't miss it!

PSM: Can you explain a little bit about the Active Time Event? What is it and how does it affect the game?

SQ: Active Time Event (ATE) is a system that lets you see events that are happening elsewhere. For example, while you are controlling the main character in a town, you can view what the other characters are doing in another part of the same town. You can follow the story and finish the game without viewing ATEs. They simply provide additional

PSM: How long has FFXIX been in development, and how many people worked on it?

SQ: About a year and a half. We had approximately 300 people working on it, including external resources.

PSM: How was the development of FFXIX different from FFXII and VII?

SQ: There wasn't anything in particular that was different from FFXII and VII.

PSM: FFXIX is the last Final Fantasy on the original PlayStation, and it's also the last game in the series before "Ten" — how did this affect the way the team approached making the game?

SQ: It didn't have a significant affect on the development. We just wanted to follow what we've been doing, which was to create one another great story for the series.

PSM: What was the main reason for taking the series back to a pure fantasy style?

SQ: This is the last of the Final Fantasies with a single digit and we wanted to go

like in FFXII. Generally, your battle position affects the amount of damage you deal and take. If you use magic or long-range weapons, you can deal just as much damage from the back row as you can from the front row. Many weapons in FFXIX have Add ST (Add Status), which can cause abnormal status effects on the target. For example, if you attack with a Mage Masher, which has Add ST Silence, then in addition to losing HP, the enemy is Silenced and

all information and behind-the-scenes details about the story and the characters. You can only view ATEs when the ATE option appears on the screen.

PSM: After playing the Japanese version of the game for a bit, we have noticed that it is a lot

"WHILE YOU ARE CONTROLLING THE MAIN CHARACTER IN A TOWN, YOU CAN VIEW WHAT THE OTHER CHARACTERS ARE DOING IN ANOTHER PART OF THE SAME TOWN."

funnier than the past games. Does this continue through the whole game or does it eventually turn serious?

SQ: Final Fantasy fans will notice that there is a lot of humor both in the beginning and throughout the game. This does not mean, however, that the entire game is completely light-hearted. All the main characters must go through some pretty serious ordeals before the story is over, so this game would not be classified as a comedy. It has plenty of heroism, suspense, and tragedy.

PSM: This game seems different from the rest of the series in that there doesn't appear to be one main character, like Cloud or Squall. Could you talk a little about this unique "ensemble" approach?

SQ: This approach has been seen in FFIV, where there was not a single "main" character. For FFVII and VIII, the story was actually created after the main characters (Cloud, Squall) were created by Tetsuya Nomura. On the other hand, the story became the base for FFX, with other elements (including characters) falling into place as the story developed.

PSM: Will the game have any PocketStation features?

SQ: Unfortunately, it will not.

PSM: We've heard that the Triple Triad Card Game from FFVIII will return — are the rules, or its purpose in the game, any different from before?

SQ: There is a card game in FFX, but it is not Triple Triad so the rules and purpose are different.

PSM: Will FFX feature a lot of minigames? Can you give us a few examples?

SQ: There are a ton of mini-games in this installment of the FF series. Most are not very difficult and are not completely necessary to finish the game. For example, one of the younger characters comes across some girls playing jump rope. He can try to break their record and do some pretty interesting jumps to get a prize. In another part of the game, the main character is an actor performing a duel before an audience. Your partner calls

the moves, and you must respond quickly and pull it off well. If the fancy nobles like your performance, you can get some extra money thrown onto the stage. Either way, you have the option to come back for an encore. Occasionally, a mini-game is necessary to advance the story. For example, at one point, a character must retrieve a key



hanging on a cage that houses a terrifying beast. He must creep up when the monster turns away and come to a stop when it turns back (kind of like the game "Red Light, Green Light"). Or else the monster will scare the timid character away.

PSM: How long do you think it will take an average gamer to complete FFX?

SQ: Based on the amount of text in the game, an average gamer will take about 40–50 hours of play to reach the end. Obviously, an experienced FF player focused on beating the game will get through much faster than someone who prefers to take their time and enjoy all the different mini-games and side-quests FFX has to offer.

PSM: Can you tell us a little about the PlayStation2 versions of Final Fantasy?

SQ: We have yet to make any announcements on FFX or FFXII. Information will be made available in a timely manner on <<http://www.playonline.com>> <www.playonline.com>.

General

PSM: We've heard that Square has made the decision to not release any strategy guides for FFX in Japan. Will this be Square's policy from now on, and if so, won't this be counter-acted by the online strategy guides starting with FFX?

SQ: Not a policy — that is something that has yet to be determined.

PSM: When can we expect to see FFX over here in the U.S.?

SQ: Before the Christmas holidays.

PSM: In closing, what final message would you like to say to our readers about Final Fantasy IX?

SQ: We are confident that this game will attract many many gamers — not only RPG fans — around the world. Be on the lookout — this will be the best game you'll play this holiday season!



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CHECKPOINT!

The PSN Release Schedule

We've listed every upcoming PlayStation game we can think of. However, keep in mind that these dates often change. It's still fun to look forward, though!

PlayStation Charts

Your monthly look at the best-selling PlayStation games



The EB Chart (For June)

This epic RPG is quickly proving to be the sales blockbuster Sony hoped it

Here are the top selling PlayStation games at Electronics Boutique stores nation-wide. Sony's epic RPG, *The Legend of Dragoon*, led the pack this month.

1 Legend of Dragoon

- 2 Legend of Mana - Secret of Mana sequel
- 3 Vagrant Story - Down from #1 last month
- 4 Cursed Ops: Nuclear Dawn - Action-packed
- 5 Street Fighter EX 2 - Capcom fights back
- 6 Triple Play 2001 - Sell the baseball champ
- 7 NBA Live 2000 - Playoff fever sparking sales?
- 8 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater - Still going strong
- 9 Syphon Filter 2 - Sony's action favorite
- 10 WWF Smackdown - Down, but not out



PC Data Chart (For June)

Legend of Dragoon's first-month sales are proof that the RPG genre is a favorite among gamers.

PC Data surveys the biggest retailers each month to find out which PlayStation games are selling the best. This month, it was Sony's *Legend of Dragoon*.

1 WWF Smackdown

- 2 Spec Ops \$9.99 - Are you out of your mind?
- 3 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater - Back like Tony!
- 4 Legend of Mana - Secret makes good
- 5 Vagrant Story - Down from last month
- 6 Syphon Filter 2 - Gabe's still an assignment
- 7 Grind Session - Sony's best skater
- 8 WWF Smackdown - Sony's top wrestling game ah
- 9 Jedi Power Battles - Beware the dark side
- 10 Triple Play 2001 - Still in the game

COLOR KEY

Green: Dates have changed since last month.
Red: New releases that are either exclusive or new to the platform.

PlayStation Games

3RD-QUARTER GAMES

AUGUST

Activision	Racing	ATV Quad Races
Activision	Wrestling	EDW Anarchy Rules
Activision	Racing	Re-Volt 2: RC Revenge
Activision	Racing	Vansport Frenzy
Activision	Action	Spideon
Activision	Action	Star Trek: Invasion
Activision	Action/Adventure	Tenaris 2: Assassins
Codemasters	Racing	World Racing Championship
Crave	Racing	San Diego Championship Racing
Edco	Sports	Sydney 2000 Olympics
Fox Interactive	Action	Allen Resurrection
ST Interactive	Action	Atmosphere
Infogrames	Racing	Windy Racer
Kavali	Sports	Major League Soccer
Midway	Racing	Rampage Stage II
Midway	Strategy	Team Illudians
Rokstar	Adventure	Delfinatic
Sony	Platform	Aladdin in Nasir's Revenge
Sony	Sports	NCAA GameBasket 2001
Sony	Sports	NFL GameDay 2001
Sony EA	RPG	Diablo Cross
Take Two	Racing	Fast Racing
THQ	Action/Adventure	Danger Ball
Working Designs	Action	Reynard

SEPTEMBER

Activision	Skateboarding	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Capcom	RPG	Birth of Milla 4
Capcom	Action/Platform	Mega Man Legends 2
Codemasters	Boating	Milky Way Bowling
EA Sports	Sports	Madden NFL 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NCAA Football 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NCAA March Madness 2001
Halo	Action	Action Man
Halo	Adventure	Breakout
Halo	Gameshow	Family Feud
Halo	Adventure	Frogger 2
Halo	Adventure	Galaga
Halo	Adventure	Jeopardy!
Halo	Racing	NASCAR Racer
Halo	Gameshow	Wheel of Fortune
Midway	Car Combat	Quadrant Derby Race
Midway	Action/Adventure	In Cold Blood
Midway	Sports	NFL Blitz 2001
Namco	Action	Dragon Valley
Namco	Action	Max Payne: Mad Madness
Sony	Sports	NHL Face Off 2001
Sony EA	Action/RPG	Resident Evil 2
Ubisoft	Racing	F1 Championship '99
Ubisoft	Action	Inspector Gadget
Ubisoft	Platform	Reynard 2

4TH-QUARTER GAMES

OCTOBER

Activision	Boating	HBO Boxing
Activision	Action	Blue Lightyear of Star Command
Capcom	Action/Adventure	One On One 2
Halo	Racing	NASCAR Race
LucasArts	Action	Star Wars: Demolition
Midway	Racing	Mugger Race Mania
THQ	Sports	T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX
Ubisoft	Racing	Satan's Obsession
Ubisoft	Action	Donald Duck Duck Attack
Ubisoft	Dancing	Jungle Book Rhythm 'N Groove

NOVEMBER

Activision	BMX Racing	Dave Miral's Freestyle BMX
Activision	Adventure	The Lion King
Activision	BMX Racing	Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX
Activision	Action	X-Men: Mutant Wars
Athas	RPG	Persona 2
Enix	Dancing	Beat-a-Groove 2
Halo	Racing	Nickerson's Racing
Konami	Platform	The Grinch
Midway	Action/Platform	Duke
Midway	Action	Mugger Master Adventure
Midway	Boating	Ready 2 Battle: Round 2
Sony	Sports	Goal Boarders 2001
Sony	Party	Crash Bash
Sony	Platform	The Emperor's New Clothes
Sony	Sports	NBA ShootOut 2001
Sony	Sports	NCAA Football 2001
Sony	Platform	Spyro: Year of the Dragon
Southpeak	Action	Defies of Hazzard 2
Take Two	Action	Helden & Dangerous
Ubisoft	Action	The Road to El Dorado
Ubisoft	Action	VI P
Working Designs	RPG	Art the Lad Collection

OTHER 4TH-QUARTER RELEASES

3DO	Action	Army Men: Air Attack 2
3DO	Action	Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2
Capcom	Action/Adventure	Resident Evil: Survivor
Codemasters	Racing	Cliff Hanger Rally 2001
Crave	Platform	Men the Chicken
Crave	Fighting	Ultimate Fighting Championship
EA Sports	Action	DOT Racing
EA Sports	Action	Medal of Honor Underground
EA Games	Action	The World Is Not Enough
EA Sports	Racing	NASCAR 99
Edco	Action	Fear Effect: Retro's Hell
Enix	RPG	Ikari no Tetsu
Enix	RPG	Valhalla Profite
Fox Interactive	Action/Adventure	Planet of the Apes
Fox Interactive	Action/Adventure	Titan A.E.
Infogrames	Action/Adventure	Alien/Dark Nightmares
Infogrames	Action	Diner 2
Infogrames	Sports/Power Spike	Pro Beach Volleyball
Infogrames	Action	Looney Tunes Time Suckers
Infogrames	Action	Looney Tunes: Sheep Dog/Wolf
Infogrames	Racing	Night Rider
Konami	Sports	ESPN Fighting
Marble	Fighting	Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots
THQ	Action/Adventure	Exit Dead: Hell to the King
THQ	Sports	MTV Sports Frenzy Ride
THQ	Action	Power Rangers Rescue
THQ	Adventure	Scobey-Doo
THQ	Wrestling	Smackdown 2: Know Your Role
THQ	Action	Incendible Drive
Working Designs	RPG	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete

OTHER 3RD-QUARTER RELEASES

Electronic Arts	Sports	RollerJam
Fox Interactive	Wrestling	Singapore Wrestling
Namco	RPG	Harvest Moon: Back to Nature
THQ	Sports	MTV Sports Skateboarding

PlayStation2 Games

4TH-QUARTER GAMES

LAUNCH GAMES

Agnes	Action	Spirits of God 2
Agnes	RPG	Ultimate Ring
Agnes	Adventure	Everquest
Capcom	Fighting	Street Fighter III 3rd
Cosmo	Racing	Fuuto GT
EA Games	Strategy	Klonoa
EA Games	Strategy	Warrior's Path (PSP)
EA Games	Action	X-Squad
EA Sports	Sports	RFA 2001 Major League Soccer
EA Sports	Sports	Madden NFL 2001
EA Sports	Racing	SSX
Endor	Action	Time Shifters
Kase	Action	Devil's Warnings 2
Kase	Action	Groove B/MV
Kase	Sports	International Track & Field
Kase	Action	Silent Scope
Kase	Action	Soulcalibur Dark Legacy
Namco	Fighting	Tekken Tag Tournament
Namco	Racing	Ridge Racer V
Rockstar	Racing	Midnight Club
Rockstar	Action	Saegwari's Run
Sony	Sports	NFL Quarterback 2001
Sony	Sports	NFL Gridiron 2001
Sony	Sports	NHL Face Off 2001
Ubi Soft	Adventure	Duke's Denial
Ubi Soft	Action	Donald Duck Duck Attack
Ubi Soft	Racing	F1 Racing Championship
Ubi Soft	Platform	Rayman 2: The Great Escape
Ubi Soft	Action	The Jungle Book

OTHER 4TH-QUARTER RELEASES

3DO	Action	Army Men: Air Attack 2
3DO	Action	Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2
3DO	Adventure	Warrior of Magic and Magic
EA Games	Action	WWE: Thunder Strike
EA Games	Strategy	Overland Chronicles
EA Sports	Action	The World Is Not Enough
EA Sports	Wrestling	WCW 2001
EA Sports	Sports	Knockout Kings 2001
EA Sports	Racing	NASCAR 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NBA Live 2001
EA Sports	Sports	NHL 2001
EA Sports	Sports	Swing Away Golf
EA Sports	Sports	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001
Endor	Adventure	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2
Kase	Strategy	Age of Empires II
Kase	Sports	ESPN X Games Snowboarding
Kase	Sports	NBA 2 Night
Kase	Adventure	Shadow of Destiny
LucasArts	Racing	3-pet Battle Racing

Micro3D	Action	Amnesia 2
Rockstar	Action	On
Sony	Adventure	Dark Cloud
Sony	Puzzle	FantasiaVision
Sony	Racing	Gran Turismo 2001
Square EA	Action	The Bourne
THD	Action	Red Faction
THD	RPG	Summer

1ST-HALF 2001 GAMES

Acclaim	Sports	All-Star Baseball 2001
Acclaim	Racing	Ferrari 200 Challenge
Acclaim	Adventure	Quintessential
Acclaim	Adventure	Diplomacy
Acclaim	Racing	Street Lethal
Infogrames	Action	Motor Mayhem
Infogrames	Adventure	Deliverance: March of Dimes
Interplay	Action	Run Like Hell
Konami	Adventure	Zone of the Enders
Midway	Action	Guardian: Dark Legion
Sony	Racing	Wipeout Fusion
Square EA	Racing	Driving Legends: Type-S

2ND-HALF 2001 GAMES

Kase	Action/Adventure	Metal Gear Solid 2
Midway	Strategy	Legion: Legend of Excalibur

TO BE ANNOUNCED

Konami	Action	7 Blades
Blue Byte	Action	Dragon's Lair 3D
Capcom	Adventure	Demon's World
EA Games	Strategy	Private of Skull Cove
EA Sports	Racing	F1 2001
Endor	Action	Eden
Endor	Action	Hardy Gerty
Endor	Adventure	Tombs Raider
Empire Interactive	Racing	World Sports Cars
Konami	RPG	Epicenter: Paradise
LucasArts	Action	Star Wars: Starfighter
Midway	Action	Spy Hunter
Namco	Racing	Moto GP
Sony	Action	Triumph Angels
Sony	Action	Exterminator
Sony	Adventure	Onion 2
Sony	Strategy	Dropcap
Sony	Racing	Formula One 2000
Sony	Adventure	ICO
Sony	Racing	Spin Sprint Car Racing
Sony	Action	The Getaway
THD	Wrestling	WWE Wrestling Title
THD	Racing	Formula X
THD	Action	Robotron
THD	Action	Top Gun

PSM'S MOST WANTED



1 ► Final Fantasy IX

We finally got a chance to play the Japanese version right before this issue went to press and were instantly sucked in by the new look and feel.



2 ► Duke Gaiden 2

So far, we've only had a small taste of Capcom's problematic sequel, but we like what we've played. There's an almost exhausting amount of non-stop action and the whole thing is super-detailed, especially the characters.



3 ► Dark Cloud

No matter how hard we try to tell ourselves that this game won't be out for a long time, it doesn't make us want it any less. It was bordering on maddening at E3, and it's only going to get more impressive from there. Ave.



4 ► Sonic Adventure

This is one game that looks great in E3, but we've gotten an early copy in the office and it's not to be confused. Stay tuned. Spyns fans, this could be the little guy's best adventure yet!



5 ► SSX

Not even the fact that it's been delayed until September in Japan can extinguish our excitement for this fun snowboarding game. It means we'll have to put up with Randy's incessant "where is it?" exclamations for a few more weeks.



6 ► Madden NFL 2001

We still haven't gotten a peek of Madden 2001, so EA's first PS2 football offering still commands our undivided anticipation. Every time we



7 ► MDK: Underground

The original MDK of horror is still one of our favorite games, and from what we've seen the sequel will exceed it in every category. New weapons, smarter enemies, and better graphics? Where do we want?



8 ► Driver

The cool factor of the first Driver still hasn't worn off for those who've been wheelmen. In fact, Chris can regularly be seen waving in-between cars in the parking lot, and Steve's been even yelling "go, go, go!" and waving every time he gets down at the ATM.



9 ► The World Is Not Enough

OK, so Sometimes Never Dies isn't James Bond's greatest ideological mission, but this one looks to make up for all that.



10 ► Punch Out

Now this is just cool. A multi-event party game mixing one of our favorite characters and his pals (and enemies, too). It's got the unmistakable look of the platformer series, but the actual events are all very different. It should be a blast for few players!



I'M NOT OKKO.
 DAMMIT! AND NO, I
 DON'T HAVE ANY
 DROIDS FOR SALE!
 GO GET A LIFE!



THERE'S
 SOMETHING DIFFERENT
 ABOUT OKKO LATELY...
 SOMETHING DANGEROUS
 AND WILD...
 I
 MUST HAVE
 HIM.



CHALLENGE FATE

20 YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE EVENTS OF CHRONO TRIGGER™. NOW A NEW SET OF ADVENTURERS PREPARE FOR A BATTLE THAT WILL SURPASS EVEN SPACE AND TIME.



CHRONO CROSS™



Animated Violence
Mild Language

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STAR TREK invasion



Follow orders from Lt. Commander Worf as you lead a squadron of elite fighter pilots into battle against fierce enemies.

Amazing graphics and effects will put you in realistic 3D combat. A huge selection of awesome weapons come to hand as you pilot a Klingon fighter or take the hot-seat to defend larger ships.

Play on a single player with repeat missions or in head-to-head with your friends in split-screen action.

INTERGALACTIC COMBAT GOES WARP SPEED!



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COUNTDOWN TO THE PS2

Welcome to our most exciting section, where every month we break all the latest news on Sony's next system. This is THE premier source for PS2 info!



COMING
SOON

SILENT SCOPE

You're the ultimate sniper in Konami's unique arcade shooter

Currently the reigning king of U.S. arcade games, *Silent Scope* has been confirmed as a PlayStation2 launch title — and it looks to deliver a lot more bang for the buck, if you'll pardon the pun. In addition to enhanced graphics (which, in fact, are fully anti-aliased — no more of the jagged edges associated with the Japanese launch games), you can expect a brand new outdoor shooting range and lots of yet-undisclosed hidden secrets.

While the home version won't come sporting the coin-op's elaborate sniper rifle peripheral (complete with an inset LCD "scope"), it will use a unique targeting system that aims to be the next best thing. You'll aim by holding down the L1 button, which lets you move a small transparent sight around the screen to target a general area near your target. Once you're close, you'll let up on the button, and a magnified scope will appear, which can be adjusted for zoom and transparency.

Beyond the bonuses and adjusted control scheme, the game promises to

be shot-for-shot identical to its arcade counterpart. As the plot has it, the presidential family has been kidnapped by the usual sinister organization and it's your job to be their one-man rescue team. The very fast-paced adventure sees you sniping from rooftops, helicopters, and even moving cars, which is sure to put your sharp shooting skills (and nerves) to the test. There are even stages that unfold in the darkness (complete with night-vision scope) and above a crowded football stadium (yikes!). Better yet, your path through each stage will vary each time you play, and there'll be several branching paths to select from during the overall mission — something that's sure to boost the game's replay value.

It's looking mighty promising from what we've played, and you can expect a full review of the game in our November issue.

— Randy Nelson

MONTH
7.5 6.0

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Arcade: October
Type: Action
of Players: 1
of Discs: 1



▲ This stage sees you picking out the terrorists from the tourists through the windows of this rustic high-rise hotel.



▲ Aiming during the busway stage is especially tough, since the car you're in keeps swerving.



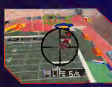
▲ This boss tries to run you down in an 18-wheeler... and his only weak point is his head.



▲ The first stage of the game sees you aiding the police from afar as terrorists run rampant in the streets.



▲ The new outdoor shooting range has a decidedly Waco-esque theme. You'll want to spend some time here getting accurate.



▲ As the president's daughter is being carried across the football field, players will actually make an attempt to locate the terrorists.



▲ You'll battle the first level boss from inside a helicopter as you both roam between the skyscrapers. Talk about hair-raising.

PlayStation 2

MGS2 DVD TRAILER

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Kojima West
Available: Fall 2001
Type: Action/Adventure
of Players: 1 (possibly 2)
of Discs: Not determined



Finally, the *Metal Gear Solid 2* trailer that debuted at E3 is available, and on DVD, no less! Unfortunately, it's only being sold in Japan, on Konami's website. Import shops may have a hard time getting copies in stock, so we thought it would be a good idea to run a scene-by-scene walk-

through of the trailer here for those that can't see the full thing in motion. We grabbed over 80 screens from the DVD, all of which are of good DVD quality. This is pretty much it for our MGS2 coverage until Konami unveils more of the game, so enjoy!



1 After a green screen with the words "The following preview has been approved for all audiences", the trailer begins with a screen full of stormy weather.



2 Out of the fog and rain we see a massive ship at sea, rocking back and forth on the choppy, stormy waves. Slowly the camera zooms in, and then we see...



3 ...a helicopter figure appear on deck. We don't know for sure, but it seems as if Snake either sub-ports on board, or uses a cloaked sub like the Ninja Wars in MGS.



4 As Snake slowly stands up, we get a great up-close look at his new P30 character model, which is much more detailed and smooth than in the last game.



5 As the camera shifts to show a close-up of Snake's head, a dramatic wave crashes on the deck behind him, the music rising. What a dramatic, heroic moment!



6 As Snake talks to Otacon via his Codec, the scene shifts to show a helicopter swooping in over the ship. It drops a rope, and soldiers climb down.



7 Right away, it's easy to see that these new enemy soldiers are much smarter and efficient than before. They easily kill the crew and take over the ship.



8 The music picks up the pace, and the familiar *Metal Gear* theme comes in. Yeah! The new musical score absolutely rocks. Snake begins to sneak around.



9 As Snake makes his way across the deck of the ship, we see some classic MGS action. Sneaking past lights, back to the wall — that's what it's all about.



10 Snake stops to show off a new ability. With his back against a wall, he can now turn his head to better look around a corner. Is doing so, he's almost spotted.

Sneak Infiltrates the Inside of the Ship



14 After climbing the stairs to the upper deck, Snake gains entrance to the inside of the ship. As the camera pans across its interior, you get a sense of the incredible detail that the environments in MGS2 will have. The graphics are very sharp, and there are some obvious problems, but it's not nearly as noticeable as in other games.



11 Having barely avoided detection, Snake gives looks of shock and then relief on his face — meaning! He'll actually need to what you do in the game.



12 Snake waits for the guard to eventually walk away, and then makes his move for the stairs. As he runs up, his feet splash water very realistically.



13 As Snake reaches the top of the staircase, you can see the guard moving away down the corridor, trying to see through the dark doors with his flashlight.



15 Just before Snake opens this door and peeks out, you can see a hand print scanner on the wall behind him — is this just some fun, or could it come into play?



16 Immediately spotting a guard across the room, Snake pulls out his dart gun and aims in to harpoon a headshot. The scope display looks much like the last game.



17 Snake shows that he can now hit from a first-person perspective. He can't run around like this (this game isn't a first-person shooter), but it's great for aiming.

Taking on the Enemy Guards



18 POW! Nice shot! The guard takes a deep dive in the mud, which actually goes through his head. Even this time in a perspective that will most likely end up close to the playable camera angle, it's better than the last game.



19 Despite the ultra-realistic graphics, the game still has the quirky touch that has become a trademark of the series, such as these deep "ZZZ"s.



20 Now the same shift to show-case another one of Snake's new skills, the ability to bring his own arms down behind one's head from side to side while bringing.



21 We see Snake head up stairs or stairs, this time in a perspective that will most likely end up close to the playable camera angle, it's better than the last game.



22 Snake walks down a dark hallway and shows us yet another new trick, the ability to slowly walk with his gun drawn (just also showing a flashlight).



23 Turning the corner at the end of the hall, Snake manages to catch a soldier by surprise. Snake has him dead to rights, as his only choice is to surrender.



24 Continuing on his sneaky way, Snake reaches another corridor and figures his way down it. The lighting here gives better, so there's no need for a flashlight.



25 Peeking around the corner, Snake spots another guard walking past the end of the hallway. This scene focuses on showing how realistic the shadows are.



26 There's an abrupt cut to this scene, where Snake has already put his pry into a chandelier. Apparently the entire animation for that move wasn't yet finished.



27 We cut away to see a unit of guards coming down the stairs. These guys are more professional, and systematically search the area trying to find Snake.



28 Opening a locker door, Snake makes a grisly discovery. This poor guy must've had his throat cut when the ship was taken over, and then shaved here.



29 The long corpse falls flat on its face at Snake's feet. If a guard had been close by, the sound may have alerted him. As it is, Snake's got a mess on his hands.



30 After looking at camera clip to distract a guard (another one of Snake's new tricks), he takes a dive off the stairs, landing in a roll that gets him to safety.



31 We cut away to see a unit of guards coming down the stairs. These guys are more professional, and systematically search the area trying to find Snake.



32 Opening a locker door, Snake makes a grisly discovery. This poor guy must've had his throat cut when the ship was taken over, and then shaved here.



33 The long corpse falls flat on its face at Snake's feet. If a guard had been close by, the sound may have alerted him. As it is, Snake's got a mess on his hands.



34 Another scene change, and the music's starting to pick up its pace. We see a mystery woman in Snake's crashhairs, but she doesn't seem too concerned...



35 Fortunately, Snake can now drop bodies and hide them in spots like this. In fact, you'll have to clean up after yourself like this or you'll alert the other guards.



40 The mystery woman starts to move, slowly at first, dropping the arm that's holding her knife. You'd think Snake would yell "Freeze!" or something, but...



41 ...it probably wouldn't matter, 'cause this girl is fast like whoa around in a circle, with that wicked motion blur that was used so much in MGS...



42 ...and swings around to throw a dagger right at Snake. The motion blur and slow-motion effect here are very cool, making this girl an instant badass.



43 As the dagger flies towards Snake, it cuts through the air leaving a distorted ripple, like the bullet effects in The Matrix. People, this looks DAMN COOL.



44 Snake is still the faster of the two, though, and after swiftly avoiding the dagger, lands down on one knee with his gun still securely targeted at the girl.



45 The girl, however, lets used the confusion to whip out a gun of her own, and now the two are at a standoff. Wasna bat these two end up on the same side?



46 Back to these wacky guards again, who have danced infra-red goggles in an attempt to finally get the drop on Solid Snake. They move out quickly...



47 ...and race down the hall in step with each other. Actually, they're so in step with each other that they seem to move as one, like a long snake or something.



48 However, infrared goggles or not, Snake sure isn't caught. Talk to a really good shot at Snake's hair, which looks pretty realistic. His hairline flows nice, too.



49 As the view shifts further back, we see the full shootout: Snake has the advantage because his pursuers are confined to a tight hallway, and can't surround him.



50 In spite of this hiding stuff, it's time to let 'em have it. Turning the corner, Snake begins to fire away into the group of soldiers, who have nowhere to hide.



51 Switching to first-person view, Snake can even target the many pipes lining the walls, causing scolding hot steam to shoot out and burn the guards.



52 A quick cut to another action scene, where we rejoin the one-on-one battle with the mystery girl. She and Snake both trade fire while running for cover.



53 Snake sets up behind some crates and continues to fire. The storm is still raging, giving the scene a very grimy and realistic feel. The action here is fierce.



54 Different action scenes begin to come in rapid-fire succession. Here Snake runs halfway down a staircase, then leaps into a quick roll at the bottom.

Snake is Discovered, and it all Hits the Fan!



55 Fed up with not being able to penetrate the guards' shield, Snake uses his nunchucks — and his first-person firing mode — to remedy the situation. By slicing just a little bit under the bottom of their shields, he takes out their legs, and the soldiers drop. You can hit enemies anywhere, with varying effects.



56 Snake gets away by a group of soldiers on a truck, and sends 'em flying over the rails with a few well-placed shots. Bullet casings fly everywhere.



57 Once the plan with the infrared goggles didn't work, the troops show up with riot shields. Snake fires round after round into them, but they hold.



58 The camera shows a close-up of Snake firing off his weapon, and he really looks like a badass. His hands jump back with the kick of the gun when he fires.



59 Under heavy fire, Snake lets the duck and reloads. You can tell this boy's been battle. In this area for awhile, from looking papers and piles of shell casings.



60 One guard gets the bright idea to shoot out the lights, then they have infrared goggles and Snake doesn't. These guys are pretty smart this time around.



61 We cut back to a new scene in the control room, where Dr. S is trapped against impossible odds. The window above him is shot out, and glass falls everywhere.

Real-World Physics Demonstration



65 As Snake is pressed down by two soldiers, we're treated to an amazing demonstration of the game's real-life physics engine. Numerous things on the shelf get knocked off, shot and shattered, and each of the items react as they should in real life. At one point, a bag of powder is shot and Snake actually sneezes!



62 After the window shatters, Snake jumps up and fires off a few rounds before having to duck for cover again. Man, there's a lot of guards piling in there!



63 It doesn't look good for Snake. His enemies are on a higher ground, and there's nowhere to escape to. Metal Gear focuses on snacking, but the action is hot!



64 We don't get to see the resolution to the last firefight, but this next part of the trailer is even cooler. We see that Snake is trapped in a stockroom.



66 Here's our personal favorite part of this scene. In their overly enthusiastic attempt to kill Snake, the guards open fire on a countless bunch of glass bottles...



67 And they each shatter differently depending on how and where they were hit. Even better, the liquid inside them oozes to the floor and forms puddles.



68 Snake can now fire while ducking, and he can quickly turn to shoot around a corner while staying in the crouched position. He continues to fire away.



71 As Snake kicks into the classic Metal Gear theme now, and it sounds as damn good you want to cry, Snake is running off-out away from explosions.



72 Back to glimpses at Metal Gear Ray, which, by the way, is named after "Heavy Ray", and its ability to swim, the storm outside rages even harder.



73 Snake leaps over the rolling steel explosives in one of the coolest uses of slow-motion we've ever seen. At this point, Kojima already has our money.



74 Things calm down a bit, as we stare at this new Metal Gear Ray from a distance. Several credits are shown in between illustrations of some of the characters.



75 As we gear up for the grand finale, the music becomes very dramatic. We catch a glimpse of Metal Gear Ray's "nose", which are used to move underwater.



76 As Snake kicks into the classic Metal Gear theme now, and it sounds as damn good you want to cry, Snake is running off-out away from explosions.



75 Snake ducks around a corner, makes a look up at the metal monster and says to Otacon over his Codec: "Otacon, this is bad". What an understatement!



77 Now for a bit of comedy. Snake is shown climbing down a ladder behind a massive group of soldiers. The sheer number of them is very impressive.



78 Being the stealthy guy that Snake is, he crawls across the room behind them, as they stare intently on at whatever it is they're looking at.



81 Comedy hit part two: Remember that poor guard who got knocked out with Snake's tranquilizer dart WAY back at the beginning of the trailer?



82 He's still out cold, that is, until his partner walks up and gives him the good ol' "kick in the head" wake up call. Will this really happen in the game?



83 As our grumpy hound finally gets up to his feet, he has no clue what happened. Funny stuff. Well, that's it for our look at the trailer — more when we get it!



80 GAAH! Our senses are off! It took us about a roomful of guards! This was a classic moment that got big laughs from the crowds who saw it.



74 The music dies to a climax, and then comes to an abrupt stop as the title of this unbelievable game appears on screen. At E3, everyone cheered like crazy.



81 Comedy hit part two: Remember that poor guard who got knocked out with Snake's tranquilizer dart WAY back at the beginning of the trailer?



82 He's still out cold, that is, until his partner walks up and gives him the good ol' "kick in the head" wake up call. Will this really happen in the game?



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DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

Publisher: Koei
Developer: Omega Team
Available: October
Type: Action
of Players: 1
E & S: 1

Fighting game meets historical sim in Koei's action-packed launch title

While it's set in ancient China during the same time period as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* series, and draws heavily on historical events, *Dynasty Warriors 2* is anything but a meticulously detailed war simulation — or much like the original *Dynasty Warriors*, for that matter. Instead, it puts you directly onto the field of battle as one of nine legendary Chinese warriors, responsible for aiding in your kingdom's victory, and generally taking some serious butt.

Taking place on battlefields nearly one square mile in size, the game will focus on delivering non-stop action with just enough strategy to keep it from becoming a mindless stab-fest. For instance, you may have to leap onto horseback and dash across the battlefield to defend a commander in trouble. Not only that, but enemy soldiers will actually respond to your prowess (or lack thereof) on the battlefield, causing lesser enemies to flee at your sight, or enemy commanders to order in their best heroes to end your life.

Thankfully, you'll have more than just your basic staff, sword, or other melee weapon at your disposal.

Each warrior has a frozen power attack that can be initiated once your spirit meter is fully charged; that deftly slashes through enemies for several seconds. There's also a bow and arrows, fired from first-person view, for hitting archers in towers and executing other ranged

This is one of nine legendary Chinese warriors you can play as.

attacks. And since you can mount and ride unoccupied horses as when you find them, horseback combat also comes into the picture.

Each battle, of which you must win five, has its own special objective (whether it be to capture an enemy commander, or so on) and up to 1,000 soldiers may represent each side. Out of those, as many as 40 highly detailed characters will be on-screen at one time with zero slowdown, making for what is easily one of the most technically impressive action games ever. Add in flying sparks, weapon trails, and detailed surroundings and you've also got a candidate for best-looking action game, period.

Sound right up your alley? Well, you won't have to wait long to find out — Koei is planning on having *Dynasty Warriors 2* ready for PlayStation 2's release on October 28, so expect a full review soon.

— Randy Nelson

Ranged Attacks

In addition to melee weapons such as staffs and swords, you'll be able to utilize a bow and arrow on the battlefield. This can be helpful in picking off archers from towers or simply hitting enemies from afar before they can attack you.



In order to fire your bow, you switch into first-person mode and can see the terrain for your target.



Firing it with the enemy enemies around isn't really suggested, but you can use how accurate you can get.

Despite being incredibly hefty, even this formidable warrior can mount a horse and gain a height and speed advantage against his enemies.



Attacks from your melee weapon will be accompanied by weapon trails and brilliant spark showers.



The scenery will vary greatly from mission to mission. This one, for instance, takes place outdoors a series of ships connected by planks.



Before each battle, a topographical map of the battlefield is displayed and shows the location of your army's units in relation to the enemy's.

Berserker Rage

Once your spirit meter is fully charged, your character will be able to unleash a flurry of melee weapon attacks and carve a path through dozens of enemies for several seconds — all accompanied by brilliant weapon trails and sparks.



A. Each warrior has his own unique power attack — this one, for instance, results in large sweeping moves.



On the other hand, this attack stays closer to the warrior, but is for more frenzied. Someone's in a world of hurt...



There will be new legendary warriors to play as, each with unique attacks, abilities, and health attributes. Make your choice wisely.

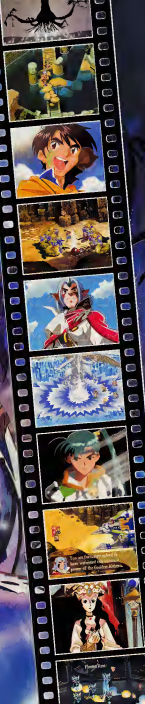


Before each battle, a topographical map of the battlefield is displayed and shows the location of your army's units in relation to the enemy's.



This character is faster, but not as strong as most of the other warriors.

*In The Darkest Hour,
Hope Springs Eternal.*



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Most of the cars feature some cool graphic designs and decals.

MIDNIGHT CLUB

A No-Holds-Barred Racer

As one of the first racers to hit the PlayStation 2 this fall, *Midnight Racer* hopes to blow past its stiff competitors: *Ridge Racer V* and *GT 2000*. Although surpassing these hit franchises will be quite a task, *Midnight Club* includes a few elements that set it apart from the rest.

Midnight Club allows players to roam anywhere at anytime. That means whether you are driving through London, New York, or Tokyo, you must rely on your own judgement to discover the most efficient path to the goal. This open-ended system may require you to go through parks, buildings, or even water! However, *MC* isn't a chaotic destruction-fest like the *Twisted Metal*

series. If you get that masochistic itch to torture pedestrians and disregard many other laws, you'll have to worry about Five-O putting a halt on your victory quest.

Graphically, the game continues to improve from previous versions; now smoke spins off skidding tires, rain turns the street into a shiny mirror, which reflects cars, buildings, and lights. Finally, the car models and the environments continue to look promising.

Lets hope that these improvements will continue up until the release date this fall. If so, *Midnight Club* could steal some of the glory from the big boys.

— Chet Barber



▲ TEEHAW! As in any racing game, perfecting the power slide is important to win. Smoke 'em if you got 'em!



▲ The rain and mirroring effects will surely wow all PS2 cybers.



▲ Although a bit exaggerated, burning rubber creates some cool smoke effects.



▲ The Honda CRX is a bit old, but still nimble.

Publisher: Electronic Arts
 Developer: Angel Studios
 Available: Fall
 Type: Racer
 # of Players: 1-2
 # of Discs: 1



▲ Don't expect to be let in any more malls after this little excursion.

The Road Less Travelled...

Driving through water, parks, and sidewalks are all an integral part of finding the best route to victory.



▲ Don't be afraid of good old Mr. H2O. He could turn out to be your friend!



▲ Although parks could be a nice shortcut, plowing through trees certainly won't save you any time.



▲ If you plan to use the sidewalks, or go through buildings, be sure not to hit anybody... well, maybe one or two just for fun!

Book 'em, Dano!

The police can be a ferocious bunch. If you leave too many on your tail, they may try a road block, or crash into you. It is best just to try and avoid them as much as possible.



▲ The *Enforcer* will also not let him into a building, or suffer the consequences of a night in jail with 'Big Daddy'!

▲ If y-a're being pursued by one cop, just let his car leave behind or it knock him out of the way.

KESSEN

War is hell, but this game is looking heavenly

We recently got a chance to go hands-on with the U.S. version of the historical war sim *Kessen*, which will hit these shores at the PlayStation2 launch by way of Electronic Arts. There's been no doubting that the game is a bona fide audio-visual epic—it's the gameplay that's just now coming into focus, and it too is looking to up the ante for console strategy.

Among the stand-outs from our advance look at the game are the special attacks that can be executed by your forces—everything from rifle barrages to horse charges to brutal cannonades. It's even possible to send a general in to execute a vicious one-man raid. In fring with the rest of the game, they're highly cinematic and suitably bone-jarring. It's also possible to persuade enemy generals to defect to your side, and there are absolutely loads of audio cues from your various generals alerting you to their status and course of action, which makes for a very involving experience thus far.

Both grandiose and historically accurate, *Kessen* might just be the stuff strategy buff's dreams are made of. We'll have a review soon, so sit tight.

—Randy Nelson

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Team
Release Date: October
Type: Strategy
of Players: 1
of Discs: 1



▲ You can either choose to view your troops' actions from far above (or better yet) right down at ground level.



▲ As your general leads his troops into battle, their actions are presented with very cinematic flair.



▲ Troop movement and order listing is handled from a rotating 3D world map which represents topographical variations and distances.

▲ This lethal rifle barrage is just one of the many special attacks your generals can order up for enemy troops.

SMUGGLER'S RUN

Rockstar's still running from the law

Since our last preview of the game, *Smuggler's Run* has dramatically improved. The three main environments are now more detailed, the framerate's higher and smoother, and the computer-controlled vehicles are a lot smarter. Not only that, but all the different gameplay elements are starting to come together nicely. It's amazing how fun and challenging a simplistic premise, like smuggling black market items from point A to point B, can be.

While there's no 100% guarantee, Angel Studios is hoping to include around 35 different vehicles, ranging from modified buggies to rally cars, and three main play modes (Campaign, Melee and Multiplayer) in the finished product. Fortunately for gamers, *Smuggler's Run* is looking to ship on the PlayStation2's launch day, October 26th. We know...it's still a long way away. That's why we're hooking you up with these brand-spankin' new screenshots, straight from the PS2 development kit. Enjoy!

—Stephen Frost



▲ There's quite a bit of detail in the environments, including countless trees, bushes and rocks. And considering each level is around 15 square miles in size, there's a lot to see.



▲ While you'll come across roads from time to time, the best route is most often off-road. That's why it helps to be driving a buggy and not a Volvo.



▲ Unfortunately rival gangs aren't going to be the only people on your tail. Border patrols appear frequently and will do everything to try to stop you.



Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: Angel Studios
Available: October
Type: Action/Adventure
of Players: 1-2
of Discs: 1

▲ By using the arrow, located at the top of the screen, and the map, you can pretty much locate the merchandise without a problem. Just be on the lookout for rival gangs.

READY TO RUMBLE Round 2

Midway's wild boxing game is back

Rather than present licensed pugilists from the world of professional boxing, the original *Ready 2 Rumble* took a more comical cartoon-style approach to the sport. Its sequel, destined to arrive just a matter of days after PlayStation 2's launch at the end of October, looks to patch some of the holes that kept the original from becoming a true king of the ring.

From a gameplay standpoint, *Ready 2 Rumble Round 2* promises to address the first game's AI issues by featuring smarter opponents that boast more variety in their in-ring strategies. Also slated for inclusion is realistic grappling, a completely re-designed training mode, and new moves for each of the 18 boxers (seven new and 11 returning). If you thought the first game's hidden character roster bordered on bizarre, you'll certainly get a kick out of two of the planned additions for its sequel: Basketball great Shaquille O'Neal and King of pop Michael Jackson. No, that's not a joke.

In addition to overall gameplay tuning, the game will also feature a revamped, calendar-based season mode with a complete storyline for each boxer and unlockable bonuses for winning matches, such as new training equipment and additional moves.

Graphically, the game will offer a slew of new touches made possible by the polygon-pushing muscle and special effects of the PS2. Apart from the boxers themselves being more detailed and better animated, you can look forward to a number of other characters appearing in and around the ring during fights, such as ring girls, corner men, and photographers—all in an attempt to boost the realism factor that much more. A number of new special effects will be used to heighten the experience, including motion blur, flowing fire auras, improved lighting, and a swimming screen effect when getting up from a knockdown.

So far, *Ready 2 Rumble Round 2* is looking quite impressive, and should offer a good alternative to the more simulation-intensive boxing games coming to PS2. Look for a full review of the game in an upcoming issue.

—Randy Nelson



▲ You'll be able to unleash new *Rumble* moves once your Rumble meter is filled.



▲ First-person mode is back, enhanced by the inclusion of cool-looking motion blur effects.



▲ Michael Butler is once again leading his trademark "let's get ready to rumble!" call to the game, along with full ring announcer voice-over.



▲ You can expect the fighters' reactions to hit to be even more outrageous than in the original game.



▲ There'll be 18 totally selectable boxers, but as usual, several bonus characters others will be unlockable.



▲ Viewing the action from over your boxer's shoulder should aid in telling exactly where your punches are going to land.



▲ There'll be several new camera modes to select from, including this default angle that seems to be a close-up when the fighters get near each other.

Familiar Faces

Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 will feature 11 returning favorites from the original game. Of course, they're being touched up to take advantage of PS2's capabilities, so you can expect much better animation, facial detail, and even realistically flowing clothes.



▲ Mike Thunder's back, and taking more body than ever. His few motion and funky moves promise to be smooth as silk.



▲ The lovely Selena Soroka sports a tight new costume with realistically flowing fabric, as well as other, um, "optimized accessories".

New Effects

It wouldn't be a first-round *Rumble* unless it had some impressive special effects to flaunt. Motion blur and dizziness effects not only look great, but really add to the realism of the experience.



▲ Motion-blurring is now used to add more realistic impact to the fast-paced boxing action.



▲ Get knocked silly and the screen will be swimming as you try to get back on your feet.

COMING
 SOON

PlayStation 2

MOTOR MAYHEM

An updated look at the future of car combat

There still hasn't been any word of a PlayStation2 version of either *Twisted Metal* or *Vigilante 8*, which is kind of disappointing. However, that doesn't mean the console won't have a car combat title within the near future. As this preview is being written, Beyond Games is nearing completion of its futuristic title, *Motor Mayhem*. Those of you with sharp eyes and

a good memory will remember that we mentioned this game a few issues back. And while there still isn't any new info available, we can show you a handful of new console screenshots. This isn't quite what the end product will look like, but it should be pretty close. Enjoy the ride.

— Stephen Frost



While these screenshots don't represent what the finished game will look like, they do give you a good idea of what to expect. We don't know about you, but we're excited.

One good piece of advice is not to mess with a rock golem when it's driving around on a huge steam roller. It would probably be the last thing you ever do.

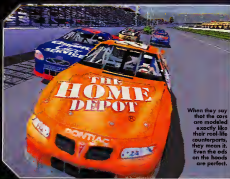
▼ Here's a look at one of the other characters in the game. She pilots a screwshotted mini-tank with several guns and plenty of missile launchers. You don't want to mess with her.



More so than in other car combat titles, *Motor Mayhem* will focus a lot on the characters which drive the various vehicles. Each has their own distinct personalities and attacks. This has got to be one hard dude.



The lighter vehicles, like this motorcycle, can jump higher and reach areas that the other, larger, vehicles have a more difficult time getting to. The drawback is that the lighter vehicles can't hold that much armor.



When they say that the cars are modeled exactly like their real-life counterparts, they aren't. Even the ads on the hoods are perfect.

NASCAR 2001

Another look at the prettiest NASCAR title yet

Well, we pretty much gave you all the facts about this game in the July issue of PSM, so we'll just let these new screenshots speak for themselves. Well, for those two of you who were in a coma or something, we'll give you the sum up. This latest version of *NASCAR* will feature 33 of the top active drivers (you can never have too many), 19 official tracks (including Daytona), and a completely rebuilt game engine developed specifically for the PlayStation2. Got it? Good. Now, take a gander at these screens before we see Dale Earnhardt on you.

— Stephen Frost

Publishers: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Sports
Available: Fall

Type: Racing
of Players: 1-2
of Discs: 1



Virtually every part of the vehicle can be damaged, and broken off. Get into too many wrecks and you'll end up seeing your engine, or at least what's left of it.



Since the PS2 is capable of rendering a large number of particle-based effects, you can have plenty of smoke and sparks appear and not have the framerate drop at all.

The intelligence of the computer controlled cars is top-notch. If you screw them over, they'll come back at you later on. Give them their space or you'll end up in an accident like this one.



Check out this close up of one of the cars. You can clearly see the driver and the manual restraint system. The driver will even move his head and arms, depending on what's going on. That's realistic.



It's not hard to
look cool
while pulling a
Double Backflip...

...Especially when your
feet are propped up on
your coffee table.



Dave Mirra

freestyle
BMX™

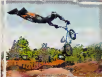


Sure, mom told you not to ride your bike in the house, but she's never seen Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX from Acclaim Max Sports. With 12 vert, dirt and street courses to tear up, you'll be ripping like the pros in no time. Use the Trick Modifier to create more than 1,300 insane tricks and combos. And with 10 sick multi-player games including Longest Grind and Gnarliest Crash, the couch will mold to your butt long before you put down the controller.

Featured pros:

Dave Mirra, Ryan Nyquist,
Leigh Ramsdell, Mike Laird,
Troy McMurray, Kenan Harkin,
Joey Garcia, Shaun Butler,
Chad Kagy and Tim Mirra.

Killer soundtrack: Sublime, Cypress Hill, Rancid,
Social Distortion, Deftones, Pennywise, Drop Kick Murphys,
59 Times the Pain and more.



Developed by



Mild Language



www.acclaimmaxsports.com

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ARMORED CORE 2

Show no mercy! Blast them all straight to hell!

Publisher: From Software
Developer: From Software
Available: October
Type: Action
of Players: 1-2
E of Discs: 1



The Introduction of Mech Games on PS2

Although mech games have never received a popular following in the U.S., From Software may gain a few fans when it releases its mech game this fall. If the already crisp graphics don't attract gamers, *Armored Core 2*'s fast-paced gameplay will.

The control scheme and look of the game is similar to *Virtual On*. On the playing field, it is important to remember to blast and slice away at enemies while simultaneously avoiding enemy fire. This leaves little time for breaks; you must constantly be on your toes. To destroy other mechanized enemies, From software has included many different weapons, such as machine guns, rockets, and swords. In addition to customizing various weapons, you can also customize all parts of your mech, including your head, torso, arms, and legs. However, customizing your mech isn't free.

Players must chase and complete missions as a sort of mercenary to earn money. The more missions you complete, and enemies you destroy, the more money you will earn. However, this game isn't simply destruction and chaos. If you waste tons of ammo, and take too much damage, you'll end up spending your profits on supplies and repairs. It seems that this added strategy to the game will keep it varied and interesting.

Although our version is still incomplete, From Software will also include an Arena mode. Arena mode could be a one-on-one fighter which closely resembles *Virtual On*; or it could be an enclosed area full of other sorts of enemies which draws ideas from games like *Smash TV*. Despite the outcome of the final version, judging from the way the game plays now, and the variety of elements included, *Armored Core 2* looks promising.

—Chet Barber



The beautiful color palette and sharp graphics make for beautiful scenery.

Dodging Enemy Fire

Quickly finding an enemy's weak method and capabilities is key to dodging enemy fire. Since you master this technique, you'll begin to understand attack patterns, which is unbeatable.



This is not the outcome you want. Any trying to shoot your way through a mission will result in failure.



If an enemy finds weak capability, firing high will take your mech out of enemy range.



The fighting effects you'll see in the arena are eerie, yet gorgeous.

We don't suggest putting yourself in such precarious positions. Doing so won't only mark the end of your mech, but cost you tons of money!



Check out that lava—Steelin' Show has legs, and you will get burned.

Equipping Various Parts

Every major body part from head to toe can be altered or upgraded on your mech. As you can see, each body part has certain advantages and disadvantages. So, depending on how you like to play, and on the type of mission you encounter, a defensive mech may be more advantageous than an offensive one, or vice versa.



Combining your legs may seem like exciting, but with a stable base, your mech will be thrashed.



Another body, yet necessary component is the radiator. Overheating could mean death.



Being a fly-by is a safe way to score a couple of hits on target.



On cliffs and mountains, watch out for enemies above. They will pound you.



Danger Never Looked So Good!

3rd person action-adventure has never been sexier with **DANGER GIRL**, the only videogame based on the best-selling comic book series by J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hertnell.

Dare to take control of 3 beautiful yet lethal Danger Girls in an espionage-themed thrill-ride deemed too dangerous for many men to handle!



Varied modes of play: stealth, sniper and more



Dozens of weapons (whips—need we say more?)



Original art by the creators



Classic Danger Girl signature moves



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REVIEWS

the most honest, dependable, unbiased
playstation reviews on the planet—period

Yes, the PlayStation is incredible — but that doesn't mean all of its games are going to knock your socks off. Our reviews give you the total breakdown on all the latest titles, so you know when to buy and when to cry.

GAMES REVIEWED THIS MONTH!

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BREAKING IT ALL DOWN, PSM STYLE



This is the Game Summary. It's kind of like "Cliff's Notes" for all you lazy types who won't read the whole review.

These are the categories that we think are most important when rating a game. Each is rated on a scale from 1 to 5.

With our Replay Chart, you can see the potential lifespan of a game at a glance! Some games are great fun at first, but quickly wear thin. Others are tough to get into, but really take off if you stick with 'em. A 5 means that you will be playing it nonstop, while a 1 means it's pretty much in the dust.

THE PSM RATING SCALE

We're here at PSM want you to know that we take our reviews very seriously. Just like you, we've been burnt before by bad games (and these days, it ain't so easy to get the store to take 'em back!). So when we sit down to review a new title, we look at it like this: if we had just shelled out fifty or so hard-earned bucks for the game, how satisfied would we be?

To summarize a game's overall worth, we use the traditional "five-star" ratings scale. If we give a game a full five stars, it's our guarantee that you can't go wrong with it, so go out there and pick it up!

WHAT THE RATINGS MEAN!

- A PlayStation classic that no fan should be without. A can't-miss game, no matter who you are!
- A really well-done game. If you're a fan of the genre, you should definitely check this one out.
- A pretty good game. It has its share of rough spots, but it has some redeeming qualities, as well.
- Maybe worth a quick look if you're a devoted fan of the genre or license, otherwise, don't bother.
- Don't even make eye-contact with this one—it's not worth an second of your time.



Backlog

These are our ratings for some of the games released over the past several months. Check 'em out for any titles you may have missed!

- Alundra 2 **0001/2**
- Armored Core Arena **0001/2**
- Armored Core S.W.A.R.M. **01/2**
- Army Men: Sarge's Heroes **0**
- Colony Wars: Red Sun **0001/2**
- Countdown Vampires **0**
- Covert Ops: Dawn **0001/2**
- Chrono Cross **0001/2**
- Crusaders Of Might And Magic **0**
- Deception III: Delusion **0001/2**
- Die Hard Trilogy 2 **0001/2**
- Eagle One: Harrier Attack **0001/2**
- ECW Hardcore Revolution **00**
- Family Game Pack **001/2**
- Front Mission 3 **0001/2**

- Galenans **0000**
- Gunfight Legends **0001/2**
- Gekido **0001/2**
- Grid Session **0001/2**
- Grudge Warriors **0001/2**
- Hot Shots 2 **0001/2**
- Hydro Thunder **0001/2**
- Koudelka **0000**
- Kurt Warner Arena Football **01/2**
- Legend Of Dragoon **0001/2**
- Legend Of Mana **000**
- MedEvil II **000**
- Micro Maniacs **0000**
- MLB 2001 **0000**
- Mobile 1 Championship **0000**
- Mr. Driller **0001/2**
- NASCAR Rumble **0000**
- NBA Shootout 2000 **0001/2**
- NFS Porsche Unleashed **000**
- NHL 2000 **0000**
- NHL Rock The Rink **0001/2**
- Nightmare Creatures II **001/2**
- Railroad Tycoon II **000**
- Rayman 2 **0000**
- Rhapsody **0000**

- Real Fishing II **01/2**
- Road Rash 2 Jailbreak **001/2**
- Rokkaku Stage II **00001/2**
- RPG Maker **0000**
- Runabout 2 **00**
- Silent Bomber **0000**
- Sosa's High Heat Baseball **00**
- Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol **0000**
- Speed Punks **0001/2**
- Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles **00**
- Street Fighter EX2 Plus **000**
- Street Sifter 2 **0000**
- Strider 1&2 **000**
- SuperStrike 2000 **0001/2**
- Surf Riders **00**
- Syphon Filter 2 **0000**
- Test Drive Le Mans **001/2**
- Threads Of Fate **0001/2**
- Vagrant Story **0000**
- Vanquish **0000**
- Vanguard Bandits **0000**
- WhatMillennium? **01/2**
- Wild Arms 2: Ignition **000**
- Worms Armageddon **0001/2**
- WWF Smackdown **0000**

Ball Breakers



PUBLISHER

Take-Two Interactive

DEVELOPER

Lost Toys

TYPE OF GAME

Action

4 The super tornado attack will plaster your enemies, however, this move should be reserved for only the toughest situations.

YES, IT DOES HURT

Doesn't *Ball Breakers* sound like a great name for a dating game? Imagine playing a lonely high school boy trying his luck with fellow female classmates? However, because of his bad luck, he doesn't encounter his dream-girl, but a series of *Ball Breakers*.

Unfortunately, the real "Ball Breakers" is not half as interesting. You can choose from 6 characters with varying strengths and weaknesses. Each character moves around on top of a ball instead of legs. Keeping your ball is essential to survival, once you lose your ball, you die — interesting concept! Besides hiding onto your ball, you must complete a series of simple mini-games within a time limit. These games include Last Man Rolling (a fighter), Run the Gauntlet (a maze game), King of the Hill, Golf, etc. The seven different games add some variety, and are spread out through 10 levels. This roughly equals 80 stages. However, playing these

games quickly becomes repetitive, and the increasing difficulty creates tedious, rather than challenging, gameplay.

On the other hand, this game does have its positive aspects. The basic concept of rolling around on a ball is different. The dark atmosphere feels appropriate, and the techno-like music suits futuristic images. Perhaps if *Lost Toys* added more obstacles in each stage, created more intricate mazes, and included more items and gadgets for your character, the gameplay would be more interesting and intense.

This wishful thinking seems to matter little in the face of a \$10 dollar price tag. The cost seems indicative of a game that is simplistic and rushed. Although 10 dollars does make this game slightly more attractive, we still can't recommend a title that will only hold your attention for a hour. Save your 10 bucks and put it towards purchasing a Greatest Hits game for 20 dollars.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GRAPHICS	2
SOUND	2.5
CONTROL	2.5
INNOVATION	1
PRESENTATION	1.5
REPLAY	1
CHART	1

GAME ★ SUMMARY

- ▲ MOVING BALLS FOR LEGS IS DIFFICULT
- ▲ DRYM SOUNDTRACK
- ▲ PAIN CONTROL
- ▼ SUB-PAR GRAPHICS
- ▼ LITTLE ORIGINALITY
- ▼ REPETITIVE GAMEPLAY

PSM FINAL SCORE:

SAVE YOUR MONEY FOR SOMETHING ELSE



Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness

CAN NAMCO I-UP THE PAC-MAN?

At a quick glance, *Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness* may seem to look and play a lot like the previously released *Pac-Man World*, but the two games are actually quite different. *World* was more of an action/platform title, while *Maze Madness* sticks closer to its basic arcade roots. In that regard, this game caters even more to the mainstream market.

Ms. Pac-Man's latest adventure is presented in full 3D, but the basic goals, which were established in the original title, are still the same. You've still got to devour all the power pellets on the playing field, and take down all the ghosts that happen upon your path. Now, however, you'll also have to solve little puzzles that were designed to slow your progress. For the most part, these puzzles involve pushing around different types of blocks and collecting colored keys, so don't expect anything too complex. They can get a bit challenging at times, but for the most part, are pretty straightforward.

While there's a lot of variety in the backgrounds and level designs, *Ms. Pac-Man* still can't quite compete with the man when it comes to sheer gameplay variety.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GRAPHICS	3.5
SOUND	3.5
CONTROL	3.5
INNOVATION	3
PRESENTATION	3
REPLAY	3
CHART	3

GAME ★ SUMMARY

- ▲ LOTS OF VARIETY IN LEVELS TO ENJOY
- ▲ EASY TO GET INTO AND PLAY
- ▲ SOUNDTRACK IS TOP-TIER
- ▼ NOT MUCH VARIETY IN GAMEPLAY
- ▼ PUZZLES ARE HARD BUT NOT NECESSARILY BRILLIANT



PUBLISHER

Namco

DEVELOPER

Namco

TYPE OF GAME

Action/Puzzle

4 Lightning cracksles as *Ms. Pac-Man* makes her way through the haunted house stage. Scary huh, grr?

After playing for about an hour, you've pretty much seen what the game has to offer. Sure, puzzles and mazes are laid out differently, but the overall experience remains exactly the same. You'll often be saying, "Didn't I do this before?" And that's the main problem here. There's just too many mazes and too little uniqueness. We would have preferred a game in the style of *World*, but taken to that next level.

Maze Madness seems more like a step back: words in the evolution of the series.

Casual gamers will definitely still get a kick out of the nostalgic gameplay, but there isn't much here to draw in the diehards. Even fans of *World* will probably want to steer clear, unless they're in desperate need of that Pac fix.

PSM FINAL SCORE:

CASUALLY FUN, BUT NOT MUCH THAT'S NEW



NCAA GameBreaker 2001



PUBLISHED
999 Sports

DEVELOPER
Rud Zens Interactive

TYPE OF GAME
Football

★ A successful pitch to the new king back can gain big yardage. Just don't accidentally touch L1 or R1, whatever you do!

TAPE YOUR FINGERS, PLUG YOUR EARS...

College football season is here and that means it's time to review college football games. *NCAA GameBreaker 2001* is 999 Sports' latest, and while it's looking pretty darn good, there are a few things that may cause a few problems for fans of the game.

On the plus side, the players are wonderfully animated and motion captured, even more so than in *GameDay 2001*. They just seem more lifelike here. 999 has included team-specific playbooks, which really add to the authenticity of the play and a tougher AI that was designed by NCAA Coaches and All-American players. And don't forget Total Control Passing, which makes the game even more realistic by allowing some leeway in your pass patterns.

The two main problems that plague *NCAA GameBreaker 2001* are centered in the sound and control areas. First off, there are the one touch pitch buttons (L1/R1), which make it really easy to get the ball to your running back. Unfortunately, they're

located right under your index fingers, so if you happen to twitch while pushing another button or are a bit clumsy, you're going to be tossing the ball to an empty spot on the field when you least want to. Fumble-ey!

And then there's the sound, which follows a very predictable pattern: drum roll, crowd noise, Keith Jackson cliché, drum roll, crowd noise, Keith Jackson cliché, and so on, and on. After a while, we found ourselves turning off the sound, just so we wouldn't hear "You can't coach foot speed" for the thousandth time. A little randomization could've prevented this drum roll after first down, cliché after second down, etc.; we don't know how 999 missed it.

If you love college football, then you're probably gonna love *NCAA GameBreaker 2001*. It is fun to play and sure is easy on the eyes. Just remember to plug your ears and tape your fingers.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN	
GRAPHICS	3.5
SOUND	2.5
CONTROL	2.5
INNOVATION	2
PRESENTATION	3
REPLAY	2.5
VALUE	3

GAME ★ SUMMARY	
▲ ALL PLAYERS LOOK GOOD AND MOVE WONDERFULLY	▼ STOP WHEN THE DRUM BEGINS BLASTING!
▲ TEAM-SPECIFIC PLAYBOOKS AND AUTHENTICITY	▼ HOW MANY Cliches DOES Keith Jackson have?
▲ TOTAL CONTROL PASSING IS GREAT	▼ TOUCHY L1/R1 BUTTONS CAN CAUSE TROUBLE

PSM FINAL SCORE:
 LOOKING GOOD, SOUNDING SO-SO, AND DON'T TOUCH THOSE BUTTONS

Rampage Through Time

ENOUGH ALREADY, WE GET THE POINT!

Midway's latest incarnation of the arcade classic *Rampage* is, if anything, even less impressive than *Rampage World Tour* and *Rampage 2: Universal Tour*. We've now seen the formula reshaped so many times that it's bordering on the ridiculous. For anyone unfamiliar with the basic concept of the *Rampage* series, players take control of one of a variety of monsters and go from town to town (or time to time in this case) smashing buildings, fighting armies (as well as each other) and eating innocent civilians. Strangely enough, this time the game always has three players because the computer will control any extras.

The latest incarnation of this 2D classic looks and feels, for all essential purposes, exactly like the other ones. Each monster can punch, kick and even has a special attack that can be gained by eating a particular type of power up. The giant rat likes cheese, the Ape likes bananas and so on. Buildings are destroyed



PUBLISHED
Midway

DEVELOPER
Midway

TYPE OF GAME
Action

★ In the future, man will conquer distant planets and colonies for all players, but will still be helpless before the rage of giant rodents.

by first climbing up their sides and attacking them, then jumping off before the building collapses.

As far as innovation goes, there's a new monster, some truly pathetic mini-games and the title's main appeal, the chance to bash people from different times. Of course, Midway has, at best, a rough idea of what historical times were like and players are treated to such interesting times as "Pirate" and "Dickens", along with the compulsory Persian and Ancient Egyptian worlds. Even the vision of the future, as presented by *Rampage Through Time*, is a boring affair full of predictably science-fictiony bubble buildings and ray guns.

Each of the mini-games corresponds to one of the twenty time periods and each one is pointless and unoriginal, feeling like last minute add-ons intended to, and failing quite spectacularly to, distinguish the game from its predecessors. Sometimes the monsters must shoot humans at each other in a top down view of the city, sometimes they must shoot little targets in a mocked up pistol range, never are they allowed to participate in any activity that resembles fun.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN	
GRAPHICS	3.5
SOUND	3.5
CONTROL	2.5
INNOVATION	2
PRESENTATION	3.5
REPLAY	2.5
VALUE	3

GAME ★ SUMMARY	
▲ OVER 200 CAN BE STORED IN THE JUNKY CASE	▼ POWERFUL NEW GAMES
▲ OLD AND THIRD GRAPHICS	▼ LITTLE INNOVATION AND FUN
▲ COMPLICATED UNUSUAL, RAMPAGE	

PSM FINAL SCORE:
 A HORRIFIC ATTEMPT AT CASHING IN ON AN AGING LICENSE

NCAA Football 2001



▲ It just wouldn't be college football without running over a ref or a head member.

NEWER? YES. BETTER? WELL...

Football season is here once again and all of the game developers are shipping out the latest versions of their gridiron games, which means that EA Sports has released *NCAA Football 2001*. Of course, now the question is: did they make a better game? The answer is a definite yes... and no.

On the plus side, EA Sports does offer some very nice new touches. To begin with, there's Advanced Player Control. This neat innovation allows you to play any position on the offensive team. Yes, that means you can be the left guard if you want, but that position doesn't offer much excitement. Now you can streak down the field, call for the pass and make that diving catch. APC does bring a new angle to videogame football.

But that's not all... EA has also added a new Situation Mode, which allows you to create any college football situation—from trying to score in the last seconds of a game to battling back from a first quarter blowout. They've also added enhancements to the Create A School option. Now you can create your own team uniforms and use Greek lettering and fraternity logos on the jerseys (we've been playing as the Miskatonic Shuggoths. Don't ask...).

Add to this a new Custom League Mode, the inclusion of the top 25 college teams as voted by EA customers, an improved running game, better defensive AI, and the new Bowl Championship Series ranking system, which guarantees that, if your team is good enough, you'll end up playing in the Orange Bowl National Championship, as well as the Moke Sugar Bowl and the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. What more could you want?



▲ Here's one of the four animations we kept seeing... over... and over... and over again.

through another lie he wasn't there. What happened to the collision detection? EA also claims to have added a ton of new animations, but after playing the game seven or eight times, we have to admit we saw the same four animations over and over



PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

DEVELOPER
EA Sports

TYPE OF GAME
Football

▲ Every once in a while, lines that are supposed to be straight won't be. Pay no attention to those crooked content on the sidelines.

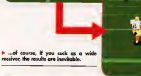
again. In fact, after each kickoff, the same player pulls the same compatriot up from the same sitting position... every time!

The main gripe with the gameplay is the camera angle the game takes during passing plays. The camera never pulls back quite far enough, so it's hard to tell if your receiver is in the open or not. Every once in a while, and we're not sure if this is a bug or not, the QB would just throw the ball out of bounds, no matter which receiver you'd selected. Minor? Yes, but damned irritating when it's 3rd and long.

After balancing the pluses with the minuses, we came to the conclusion that *NCAA Football 2001* is worthy of a place in your sports game library, but only if you've got a high tolerance for annoying things. It offers a healthy challenge, provides plenty of thrills, but does tend to grate on your nerves every once in a while.



▲ With Advanced Player Control, you can play as the wide receiver, run whatever pattern you want, and then call for the QB to throw you the ball...



▶ Of course, if you sack up a wide receiver, the results are inevitable.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN

GRAPHICS	★★★★★	3
SCORES	★★★★★	14
CONTROL	★★★★★	2
INNOVATION	★★★★★	3.5
PRESENTATION	★★★★★	2

REPLAY

CHART

GAME ★ SUMMARY

▲ ADVANCED PLAYER CONTROL ADDS DEPTH TO THE GAME

▲ THE BOWNS ARE ANIMATED; IT'S ALMOST LIKE BEING AT THE STADIUM

▼ GRAPHICS CAN BE JEER AND ANIMATIONS IS JEER

▼ BAD CAMERA ANGLE MAKES HITTING OPEN RECEIVERS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT

PSM FINAL SCORE:
BETTER THAN LAST YEAR'S? WELL, THAT DEPENDS...



RAYMAN 2



9.1.2000



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Two Adventures



He transforms into monsters
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She uses powerful magic spells
It's a whole new game



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Mild Animated Violence
Mild Language

Valkyrie Profile



PUBLISHER

Enix

DEVELOPER

Tri-Ace

TYPE OF GAME

RPG

« The combo-based combat system is one of the high points of *Valkyrie Profile*, delivering a fighting game like rush and plenty of strategy.

ENIX DELIVERS AN RPG THAT'S ANYTHING BUT CLICHÉ

Mixing side-scrolling platform action, combo-based fighting, and god sim-like character development, *Valkyrie Profile* is quite easily the most atypical and creative RPG ever released on the PlayStation. Of course, all of the creativity in the world doesn't make for a great game, but thankfully all of the pieces come together just right to make this adventure one for the ages.

The main gist of the game lies in recruiting and training human souls so that they may be sent to Asgard, home of the Norse gods, to fight in the ultimate battle between good and evil. Since you have different souls to train throughout the adventure, you get to see the story surrounding their lives, which makes for a very refreshing change from traditionally linear RPG plot lines. It also means that there's a lot more strategy involved in managing the stats and inventories of your party members.

The game's method of exploration is also quite refreshing. Instead of tedious overhead dungeon crawling, you control the valkyrie in side-scrolling stages akin to those in *Castlevania Symphony of the Night*. There's plenty of platform-style gameplay to be had, and it's actually better playing than most dedicated action-platformers. More *Street Fighter* than *Final Fantasy*, the combat system is a real standout, and focuses on mastering attack combos. So if you can send your party members to attack in any order you wish, and without any delay in between, the experience can generate quite a rush, and a lot of satisfaction when you know you've landed your combo just right.

The game also earns high marks when it comes to graphics and sound. The towns, exploration stages, and characters boast gorgeous details, both pre-rendered and hand-drawn, while the musical score is suitably stirring and matches the game's epic vistas perfectly.

It's not without some hiccup, such as the fact that your weapons (which are made, rather than purchased) can break easily and your exploration can sometimes be stifled by the time limit placed on the game's chapters, but *Valkyrie Profile* proves to be a superb experience overall. Even if you've only played the more "mainstream" RPGs, the PlayStation has to offer, the game is good enough to warrant a look — chances are you'll be glad you did.

« With so many towns to visit, you'll be tempted to explore. Unfortunately, your first per chapter is somewhat limited, so you have to keep your curiosity to a minimum if you want the good ending.

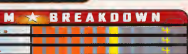
► You control Lenneth Valkyrie, a Norse goddess of war, charged with recruiting human souls to do battle in Asgard for Odin.

▼ The game's scenery, especially its towns, is often stunning, even though it's purely 2D. There's absolutely loads of paradise scrolling.

Young man:
It's not a good idea for a woman to be walking outside all alone.



« This warrior is just one of the souls you'll have to recruit inside during the game.



▲ As if the combat wasn't exhilarating enough, you can execute massive Purify moves in order to knock precious items out of your enemies.

▲ The exploration segments play out like a classic side-scrolling platformer, with plenty of precision jumping and even a cool weapons/climbing mechanic based on shooting ice crystals.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN									
GRAPHICS									14
SOUND									16
CONTROL									16
INNOVATION									14.5
PRESENTATION									14.5
OVERALL									15

GAME ★ SUMMARY									
▲ IMPROVED DUNGEON DEVELOPMENT									
▲ UNIQUE COMBAT SYSTEM									
▲ BREATHE-SCENARY AND SOUND MUSIC									
▲ LOTS OF HIGH-QUALITY VOICE ACTING									

PSM FINAL SCORE:
 A UNIQUE ADVENTURE THAT'S WELL WORTH TAKING



Mortal Kombat: Special Forces



PUBLISHER
Midway
DEVELOPER
Midway
TYPE OF GAME
Action/Adventure

« This is one of the many old-looking ways to look at your opponent. This guy blew up and good...

MORTAL KOMBAT IS DEAD!

This game is plagued with serious problems that make playing a chore, rather than an enjoyable experience. First, the huge levels are empty, and contain tons of rooms that seem to contribute nothing to the game. It is curious to unlock or find a secret room with nothing in it.

Second, the enemy AI is just plain cheap. On many occasions, you'll turn a corner and get bombarded by invisible fire. Once you spot the enemy, you'll have to take four or five hits in order to reach and destroy the nuisance. Even if you have a gun, it is imprudent to waste any ammunition on anything except bosses, since the bosses are pretty cheap, too. Finally, the puzzles in this game are trivial and annoying. Since they often involve only the discovery of keys, you'll quickly find yourself getting frustrated with the tediousness of the tasks.

Despite the first-generation feel to this game, *Special Forces* isn't a complete loss. The graphics and sound are interesting, at least in a MK sort of way; you just may find some joy in *Special Forces* when Jax smashes his enemies into pulp and bursts, "Would you like fries with that can of whoop ass?" — Midway's own tasty combination? Also, the ability to learn decent-looking combos may also entice a few gamers to continue playing. However, unless you're like Chibi-Chen, who must master every combo in a game, the difficulty of executing the more elaborate ones will ultimately turn off most players. Perhaps if Midway concentrated on refining this aspect of the game most (and the broken story a little, too), the fighting interface could have been MKSF's saving grace!

» Too bad Jax doesn't look this imposing in the game.



X-Men: Mutant Academy

ALL MUTANTS MUST DIE!

Fox's *Mutant Academy* isn't a horrible game, for it is definitely playable. However, it doesn't excel in any one area; the graphics and animation are stiff and bland, the control is mediocre, the moves are limited, and combos are nearly absent.

The only area that this game does shine in is its *X-Men* theme. Many *X-Men* favorites are included, such as Wolverine, Beast, Sabertooth, Magneto, etc. Although we would recommend this game only for fans of the comics, even purists may be disappointed. For example, the Wolverine's newer yellow and brown suit isn't the redesigned one from the comics, but his original suit with brown replacing the blue markings. Also, since when does Mystique fight, let alone knock Wolverine off his rocker?

In terms of gameplay, *Mutant Academy* initially seems promising, but falls way short of anything entertaining after only thirty minutes of play. Each character has



PUBLISHER
Activision
DEVELOPER
Pandox
TYPE OF GAME
Fighting

« Pulling off supers may look cool and exciting, but executing them into a long combo may take a bit of practice.

only two basic special moves and three different types of supers. Although the special moves are especially nothing special, the supers throw in some interesting concepts to the genre.

The first super bar is a standard super, but the second super bar is a *Paraspe* the *Rappa*-like super move. As soon as you perform this super move, you have about three seconds to input a series of moves on the D-pad (up, down, left and right); the more you successfully complete, the more energy your opponent will lose. The third super is retarded. It is the *X-Super*. As soon as this meter is full, you must rapidly tap the X button to activate the super. This five seconds of button tapping leaves you open to attacks from your opponent, and trust us, with the cheap computer AI, you will be attacked. Although this last super is an attempt at an original idea, actually executing it is impractical.

Overall, *Mutant Academy* is at best an average fighter that lacks the seriousness and technique of Capcom's *X-Men* games.

PSM ★ BREAKDOWN	
GRAPHICS	2.5
SOUND	2.5
CONTROL	2.5
INNOVATION	1
PRESENTATION	2.5

GAME ★ SUMMARY	
« Great Gameplay And Sound	» Great Puzzles
« Many Interesting Combo System	» Cheap Enemies
	» Broken Story

PSM FINAL SCORE:
PERFORM A FATALITY ON THIS DISK!



PSM ★ BREAKDOWN	
GRAPHICS	2.5
SOUND	2.5
CONTROL	2
INNOVATION	2
PRESENTATION	2.5

GAME ★ SUMMARY	
« Some Favorite X-Men Characters Included	» Bland Graphics
« Under Paraphrase-Only Super Move	» Limited Set Of Moves
» Slow Control	» No Real Combo System

PSM FINAL SCORE:
EVEN X-MEN FANS SHOULD JUST GIVE THIS ONE A RENT



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DESTINED TO
DESTROY...

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PlayStation 2



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NFL GameDay 2001



PUBLISHER
 989 Sports

DEVELOPER
 Red Zone Interactive

TYPE OF GAME
 Football

4 You'll be able to check out player stats after a successful play. Way to go, Napoleoned!

IT'S TIME FOR A NEW STADIUM...

Just last month, we took our first look at NFL GameDay 2001, 989 Sports' latest version of the perennial gridiron classic, and at that time, we wondered if this would be the last version to grace the original PlayStation. Now we've received a review copy, and played it a whole bunch of times, and we still don't know if this is the last PlayStation version. However, we can truthfully say that we don't believe there's much more anyone, let alone 989, can do to improve this game further. It's time to move over to PS2.

GameDay 2001 has evolved from its simple beginnings back in 1995. What were once sprites are now realistic polygon players, scaled to their actual heights and weights. Clumsy collisions have been replaced with new motion captured tackles of all varieties. An easy to confuse AI has evolved into a lean, mean football machine, demanding your best efforts to defeat. And, for the first time ever in a GameDay, you can now play as any receiver or running back you want.

Nothing that evolves does so perfectly, and GameDay 2001 is no exception. Graphically, the stadiums tend to vibrate and pop a bit, kinda like 3Comm during an earthquake. The play selection screens could still be a bit more detailed. While the players have been scaled to size and weight, they sometimes seem to glide over the field rather than run on it.

All of these are minor complaints, though. The game still handles very well and is one hell of a good time. 989 brought in enough NFL stars to to field an All Star team in the making of this game. The playbooks were designed by 55 NFL veterans, guys like Jerome Bettis, Terrell Davis and Mike Alstott, while the motion capturing was performed by some of today's hottest stars, like Charles Woodson and Tim Brown (ahem... both Raiders...).

So, no, we're not damming NFL GameDay 2001 with faint praise, not at all. It's just that this game has evolved as far as it can on this particular PlayStation. Will you want it for your library? You should. It's a very good game. Will you want another version on the original PlayStation next year? It's not likely. It's time to build a new stadium.



▼ Slash brings the Steelers up to the line of scrimmage.



▲ The Instant Replay feature, complete with telestration, makes it easy to see why a play worked. You won't need to wave a red flag or phone the referee to see it, either.



GAME ★ SUMMARY

- ▲ PLAYERS ARE SCALED TO THEIR REAL SIZE AND WEIGHT
- ▲ THE AI IS VERY TALENTED
- ▲ AUTHENTIC NFL PLAYBOOKS
- ▲ INCLUDES EVERY PAST SUPER BOWL TEAM
- ▲ GRAPHICS TEND TO VIBRATE JUST A BIT
- ▲ PLAY SELECTION SCREENS ARE STILL A BIT MADD

PSM FINAL SCORE:
 DARN GOOD, BUT WE WANT THE PS2 VERSION!



TYSON



Fight Mike, or as Mike!

Take on the champ and a ton of bad-ass opponents on your way to the title shot. Or, be Tyson, and feel what it's like to knock the world senseless.



It's real! It's fierce!

The incredible realism includes sound effects, blood, facial damage, sweat—and individual recovery rates that can turn any bruising hero into a zero.



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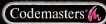
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Train with sparring partners in an authentic gym—then let it fly prime time with jabs, body blows, weaves, punches, blocks and knee-buckling uppercuts.

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ON!



Make 'em eat canvas!
You can power up a punch to increase damage—or nail your opponent's sweet spot, then watch him go 'night-night' as the lights go out on his lame career.



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Bust A Groove 2

Yo dawgz an' shorlys in da house... Bust A Groove® is back and it's lit! Peep da prat infect-shooz drumplin' beatz, as you groove da moves of Heat, Hero, Kelly or any of da uther fifteen superfly cats in da puttin' dancin' flava jam. With lots mo' il' beats and spins like da 'Apple Jack', 'Helicopter', 'Six Step', and da 'Turtle', Bust A Groove 2 iz all that. Get hip to Bust A Groove 2.




ENIX
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THE PLAYSTATION 2 AT WAR: WILL SONY WIN AGAIN?

Illustration: Michael Gidycz

On September 9, 1995, a well-known consumer electronics company released its first videogame console upon the U.S. market. The company's name was Sony and the console was, obviously, the PlayStation. Thanks to brilliant marketing, good timing and strong third-party support, the PlayStation grew to become the single most successful console of all time. Currently over 70 million units have been shipped all over the world.

Now, five years later, Sony readies itself for the U.S. launch of the PlayStation2, the 128-bit successor to the little gray box we've all grown to love. And with it, the company is hoping, once again, to take the top spot in this next generation of consoles. However, unlike in this previous generation, Sony

won't have it so easy. Sega has already established itself well in the U.S. with the Dreamcast, Nintendo is preparing a console that's about as powerful as the PS2, and probably cheaper as well. And then there's Microsoft, which has dreams of becoming the new Sony. Needless to say, the upcoming war isn't going to be pretty and there are bound to be several casualties. Who's left standing at the end remains to be seen. Our money's on Sony and the PS2, though.

In this feature, we've broken down and analyzed virtually every aspect of the Sony's future plans for the PS2 and what it's doing to win the next generation console war. From the design of the hardware to the broadband network and third-party support, we point out the strengths and weak-

nesses in Sony's line of defense. Not only that, but we also look at and rate how Sony is doing in comparison to its opposition. In the end, we provide you with our own conclusions, but that shouldn't stop you from coming up with your own.

Is Sony going to completely dominate or is another company going to step in and steal away the spotlight? What can Sony do to ensure its victory? Read the feature, think about it, and then send your opinions our way at psm@imaginemedia.com. Just remember to put "PS2 Feature" in the subject line. We'll run the best responses in a future issue of PSM.

Now, let's head to the front lines and see what Sony's up to....



THE HARDWARE: SONY'S WEAPON

When Sony released the first specs for its next generation console, most people were blown away. No one expected that the PlayStation2 would be so powerful. It appeared to be an unstoppable force that no company, whether it be Sega, Nintendo or Microsoft, could ever hope to overcome. However, over time, the limitations of the console revealed themselves. Developers became vocal about some of their frustrations with the hardware. Did Sony make some major mistakes when developing the PS2? There is that chance. In this section, we break down the strengths and weaknesses of the console and discuss what Sony is doing to make life easier for developers.

THE STRENGTHS

► Polygonal Horsepower

Far and above anything else, the PS2's strongest aspect is its ability to render an extremely large number of polygons on-screen at any given time. Already, some developers have stated that their current game engines push in the upwards of 10-20 million polygons per second and that we can expect that number to be much larger with future titles. When you consider the fact that the current PlayStation can only push around 360,000 polys per second, one can begin to see the potential and power in Sony's new console. This "polygonal horsepower", as the developers of *Munch's Oddysee* like to describe it, will allow for much larger worlds and greater detailed characters than have been seen on past consoles or PCs.

► DVD Support

Including DVD support was a brilliant move on Sony's part. It not only helps to justify the higher retail cost of the PS2, but also ensures that the console will become the centerpiece of the living room. When you're not in the mood to play games, you can pop in that copy of *The Matrix* and enjoy the adventures of Neo and Morpheus. Of course, the PS2's ability to support DVDs doesn't just mean that it can play movies. Thanks to the additional storage space available on a DVD, developers can use a greater number of higher resolution textures in their games. This would allow for larger and more detailed environments for players to explore. Also, games that would normally fill up multiple CDs, like a *Final Fantasy* game, can now be released on a single DVD.

► Expansion Ports

As Kaz Hara, the President of SCEA, elegantly put it at the past E3 show, "The PlayStation2 is not the future of videogames. It is the future of entertainment." With that focus in mind, Sony designed the PlayStation2 to be able to grow beyond being a typical console. The inclusion of several connectivity ports (two USB and one i.Link) will allow the PS2 to connect to a myriad of components and peripherals, ranging from keyboards to digital cameras. Imagine being able to download a photo into the PS2 and editing it with a keyboard and a mouse. Then, you could email that edited picture to all of your friends. That's just one of the many possible scenarios that Sony imagines happening in the near future.

► Hidden Potential

With the design of the PS2, Sony has gone in an entirely different direction than Sega, Nintendo or Microsoft has. Not only did the company basically create the entire console from scratch, using an innovative CPU and graphics processor (that it helped to develop), but it also designed the console to be very open in its architecture. This openness allows developers to come up with their own way of doing things. There is no one "right way" to do something on the PS2, which means developers will constantly be discovering new and better ways to get the most out of the console. Stuart Denman, the Technical Director for Surreal Software, feels that the open design of the console "will allow the PS2 to have more long-term potential. Games in three years will be leaps and bounds beyond today's games." Ken Levine, of Irrational Games, echoes those statements with his own, "The interesting thing about the design of the PS2 is that you'll see the games get better and better and better through the life of the console. This is because developers will always be learning new tricks. There's a lot of secrets tucked away in there."

► Backwards Compatibility

The only console in recent history to include backwards compatibility, the PlayStation2 will allow you to play all those PlayStation games you currently own. Not only that, but it will speed up loading times and improve the look of most of those games. Sony will also release updates to the PS2 PlayStation drivers so that games can be further enhanced in different ways, such as increased resolution.



THE WEAKNESSES

► Anti-aliasing Difficulties

On the day of the Japanese launch, however, the first dent in the PS2's armor was discovered. Not only were the first games not visually far and beyond the current crop of Dreamcast games, some of them actually looked slightly worse. This was mainly due to the lack of anti-aliasing (AA) technique used to blur the edges of polygons, which caused the games to look very rough and jagged. Since Dreamcast titles didn't really suffer from this problem, a lot of gamers and journalists started to doubt the abilities of the PS2. Did Sony forget to include a feature that both the N64 and Dreamcast had and that the Dolphin and X-Box will have? Fortunately, the answer to that question is "no". The PlayStation2 does have that feature and developers are able to implement it in several different ways. The main reason that the early Japanese titles and some American ones didn't have anti-aliasing (AA) is because, quite simply, the developers don't know how to do it properly. Only recently has Sony made info available to developers that allow them to implement AA in a more efficient manner. Still, including true AA tends to put a bit of a burden on the PS2, which means that corners have to be cut elsewhere, at least until developers become more familiar with the hardware. For some games, the drop from 60fps to 30 is the way to go, for others, a reduction in texture resolution is a necessity. There are ways to give the illusion of AA, without having to take cuts in performance, and some developers taking advantage of them. However, until Sony comes up with specific and easy ways to implement true AA that don't take major hits on performance, you probably won't be seeing a huge number of games take advantage of it.

► Limited Video Memory

If you talk to any developer and ask them what single aspect they would have wanted improved on the PlayStation2, they would probably say, "Increase the amount of VRAM." Since its release, the PS2 has gotten a lot of negative criticism from developers because of the limited amount of video ram (VRAM) that's embedded on the Graphics Synthesizer (GS). Since it's so small (16MB), games must be designed in a way that's very different from other consoles. A lot of time must be spent in coming up with the best ways to stream data and textures from the main system memory into the VRAM because it isn't large enough to hold anything for long periods of time. Consoles like the Dreamcast have larger amounts of dedicated texture memory (16MB), so there's no need to worry about streaming anything. What's most frustrating to developers is that the PS2's VRAM limitations really seem to hamper the potential of the console. Famed *Metroid* *Gear Solid* creator, Hideo Kojima, even went on record saying that the full potential of the PlayStation2 would never be reached because of the limited size of the VRAM. Only time will tell if he's right or not.

► Difficult To Program For

While most developers welcome the openness of the PS2's design, it can cause some serious problems. There are just so many different ways to do everything, and it can get a bit overwhelming rather quickly. Having to worry about the limited VRAM (see above) wouldn't be that big of a deal if it was the only major challenge

that developers had to deal with, but it's not. There's also the matter of two little things called Vector Units. You see, the Emotion Engine, which is the main CPU of the PS2, is split up into three main sections that can be used to process separate parts of a game engine independently: physics, lighting, weather effects, etc. However, getting all these parts to work together smoothly and optimally is quite difficult and generally gives developers their fair share of headaches. Some developers, like those at Oddworld, have been very vocal with their frustrations, stating that there have been "a few oversights that failed to be addressed at the hardware design level [The PS2] is a frustrating system to develop for." While the woe of the Oddworld developers certainly don't reflect those of the majority, it does make you question Sony's hardware design.

► Lack of four controller slots

While not as major as the other weaknesses we've listed, the lack of four controller ports did come as quite a surprise for many developers and gamers. When you consider that all of the consoles in the next generation have four ports, it's strange that Sony only included two. Sony doesn't feel that it's a major problem and suggests that gamers who want to play four-player games should just go out and buy a multibay. That's not the point, though. We all know how badly the PlayStation multibay was supported. Why would that change with the PS2? It's been proven that developers don't like to support console add-ons (see Sega CD, 32x) because only a small portion of the market ever has them. That's why you never really saw a lot

of four-player games on the PS, aside from sports titles. Sony should have just included the two additional ports and made everyone that much happier.

THE BOTTOM LINE

As with any new console, the PlayStation2 introduces its fair share of problems to developers. However, most are willing to take the time in order to get the most out of the system. Still, the problems with the hardware, such as limited anti-aliasing abilities and the small amount of VRAM, are very real and can't be denied. Now, the severity of these problems has yet to be determined. For every developer who's complaining about the hardware, there's several that are praising it. It just boils down to the willingness of the particular developer and the financial and physical resources they have at their disposal. For the most part, though, companies are developing their own solutions and workarounds for these problems. It doesn't appear to be a big deal. And Sony's R&D division is constantly creating new tools and software libraries in order to make life easier for the developers, as well. If a majority of these hardware difficulties can be nipped in the bud early on, then there's no reason why companies won't stick with Sony. However, if we get into the new year, and a lot of these difficulties continue, then Sony may start to see developers jumping ship in favor of easier consoles, i.e. the Dolphin and X-Box. And that would not be good for PS2 owners.

► SCORE: ★★★★★

MASTERING THE HARDWARE

All new consoles have a learning curve to them, and it takes several years before developers can come to grips with the hardware and push it to its max. The same will hold true of the PlayStation2, only you'll see greater leaps (visually and gameplay-wise) between generations of games than you have with the current PlayStation.



Remember the vast improvement that it was over the first Ridge Racer? Well, just imagine what this final Ridge Racer title on PS2 will look like, when you already look this amazing.



THE SOFTWARE: Sony's AMMUNITION

Regardless of how powerful a piece of hardware is, it can't do anything without a steady stream of good software to go along with it. Software is what causes a console to sell like hotcakes or stay on the store shelf and collect dust. The current generation of



consoles is a perfect example of this. With little quality support from third-party companies, both Sega and Nintendo lost out to the PlayStation. If you wanted to play the latest Final Fantasy, Resident Evil or NFL GameDay, there was one console you had to have. And that's why Sony has shipped more than 70 million PlayStation2s throughout the world.



THE COMPETITION



Sony's Dreamcast

Thanks to its simplistic hardware design and PC-style architecture, the Dreamcast has been a developer's dream to develop for. It's very easy to get the most out of the console, which is why some DC games look just as good (and sometimes better) than the first generation of PS2 titles. However, this will almost certainly change in the coming year. It seems that the power of the console has nearly already been mixed out with such titles as Shenmue and Resident Evil: Code Veronica. Most developers feel that they can still squeeze a bit more out of the system, but that they won't get a chance to because their focus has now shifted to PlayStation2.

► SCORE: ★★★★★



Nintendo's Dolphin

Little is known about the Dolphin except for that fact that it should be at least as powerful as the PlayStation2. There's also a possibility that the Dolphin will have a greater amount of dedicated texture memory, allowing it to display a larger number of higher quality textures at a time. Its design will be more straightforward and resemble the Dreamcast in a lot of ways, which should make developing for it a lot easier than the N64. Knowing Nintendo, however, there's bound to be some problem with the console. There always is. The ability to connect it with the upcoming GameBoy Advance is a plus, and will help the console compete with the PS2's expendability.

► SCORE: ★★★★★



Microsoft's X-Box

Hardware-wise, the X-Box looks to surpass every other console out there. In a lot of ways it resembles a PC, but with more power at a much lower price. Its unified memory design allows developers to give memory to what needs it most, which is in direct contrast to the other consoles that all have dedicated amounts of texture memory or cache available to them. Also, the X-Box will have a built-in hard drive, whereas the PS2's will be separate. Developers will be more likely to take advantage of the X-Box's drive because everyone will have one. The X-Box will be the simplest to develop for and should have the most available power.

► SCORE: ★★★★★

In this next generation of consoles, software will once again dictate what consoles gamers will buy. Sony is well aware of this and is going out of its way to entice developers to support the PlayStation2. It seems to be working, because virtually every major company has signed on to do at least one title. Most, however, have at least 3-4 in the works.



Since the releases of Nintendo's and Microsoft's consoles are still a way off, PlayStation2 has become the main focus for a lot of companies. A lot of these companies will continue to support the Dreamcast for the rest of this year, but after that, many we talked to are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

To give you a better idea of the amazing amount of third-party commitment that the PS2 has, we've broken it down into short-term and long-term support. Take a look and see why it's going to be difficult to knock Sony's 129-bit console out of the #1 position.

► Short Term (First Six Months)

Despite having a very lackluster Japanese launch line-up, which consoles always tend to have, the PS2 is looking strong for its U.S. debut. All of the big companies, ranging from Electronic Arts to Capcom, will have titles ready for the October 26th launch day. And unlike overseas, there will be at least one game from each genre. Titles like *Madden 2001*, *Tekken Tag Tournament*, *Ridge Racer* and *SSX* will do a lot to sell systems, and that's just on the first day. Sony promises over 50 titles will be released by December 31st, and that another 50 will be ready by the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 2001. Of that isn't amazing short-term support, we certainly don't know what is. The only downside is that no major titles, like *Resident Evil IV* or *Metal Gear Solid*, will be available in the near future. We'll have to wait at least a year for them.

POTENTIAL: ★★★★★

► Long Term (First Two Years)

As far as long-term developer support goes, Sony probably couldn't paint a brighter picture if it wanted to. In all, there are around 390 titles in production right now,

but that's only in Japan. If you take into account U.S. and European companies, the number jumps up to nearly 450, most of which will be released within the console's first two years of existence. That's just staggering. No previous console has had even close to the same level of commitment from the development community. That just goes to show you the amount of faith that companies have in Sony. Also, just as the PS2 starts to reach a larger number of casual gamers (around Fall 2001), many of the more anticipated titles will be available. You'll be able to play *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Final Fantasy X*, and possibly *Resident Evil IV*. By far, the PS2 has the greatest potential, game-wise, than any other console before it, and gamers are going to want to own one because of that single fact.

POTENTIAL: ★★★★★

THE BOTTOM LINE

There are still a lot of unknowns in this new generation of consoles, but we have to put our money with Sony. There's already been a large outpouring of support for the PS2 and we highly doubt that any of the two upcoming consoles or the Dreamcast will ever see this level of third-party commitment. That's not to say that companies wouldn't jump ship if they saw a better opportunity. However, almost all of the ones we surveyed were perfectly happy working with Sony and developing for the PS2, so we doubt that would happen. All in all, the PS2 is looking to have an even better software library than the current PlayStation, and that's saying an awful lot.



PlayStation, we expect Nintendo to continue support for the PS2 by releasing 3-4 quality titles a year.

Company: Capcom

In the Works: *Street Fighter EX3*, *Resident Evil IV*, *Onimusha*, *Dino Crisis 3*

Capcom has been very supportive of the Dreamcast, thus far, but we predict that its focus will move back over to the PS2 next year. Gamers can expect all the popular franchises that appeared on the PS to appear on the PS2. The only uncertainty is if Capcom will be bringing their 2D titles over, as well.

Company: Midway

In the Works: *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2*, *Spy Hunter*, *Legion*, *NFL Blitz*

Supporting pretty much every viable console, Midway also has several games in the queue for the PlayStation2. Most of the games will be ports of the company's existing arcade titles, but a few will be original and exclusive to Sony's console. The only launch title, however, will be Gauntlet: Dark Legacy.

Company: Konami

In the Works: *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Z.O.E.*, *Silent Hill 2*, *Silent Scope*, *ESPN Int. Track & Field*

Metal Gear Solid 2. Need we say more? Konami was single-handedly responsible for the most impressive game on the PS. Now, it looks to do the same with the PS2. Not only that, but the company's other PS2 titles also look amazing and should do a lot to sell systems.

THE A-TEAM: PLAYSTATION2'S BEST ALLIES

When Nintendo first announced its 64-bit console, it also came up with a list of select companies that were signed on to do games. This list contained the so-called Dream Team that would help Nintendo achieve the number one position in the videogame wars. Well, despite the number and quality of developers on that list, it can't even begin to compete to the A-Team that Sony has on its side. Here are eight of the many companies that plan to support the PS2 in a big way.

Company: Electronic Arts

In the Works: *Madden 2001*, *The World Is Not Enough*, *SSX*, *X Squared*

By far the company most supportive of the PS2, EA has around 30 titles currently in development. This includes its popular sports franchises, several action games, and several of its hit PC titles. Of all the companies on this list, EA will have the most games ready for launch.

Company: Namco

In the Works: *Ridge Racer V*, *Tekken Tag Tournament*, *Moto GP*

While not as vocal with its PS2 plans, Namco has several projects in the works for the console. Obviously, *RVV* and *Tekken* will be launch games, but not much is known about *Moto GP*. As with the current

THE COMPETITION



Sega's Dreamcast

The Dreamcast has an amazing library of games, but third-party support for the console will dwindle towards the end of the year. That is, unless Dreamcast sales climb this Holiday season. Sega is one of the premiere software companies, and will support the DC until the very end. That, at least, ensures that DC owners will have a chance to play more AAA titles over the coming year.

SHORT: ★★★★★ / LONG: ★★★★★



Nintendo's Dolphin

The Dolphin will launch with a *Mario* game, followed up with several AAA first- and second-party titles. *Pokemon* will also be present. Third-party will probably be slow at first, but then pick up as time goes on. Most developers will be cautious, however, as it's always been hard to make a profit after Nintendo's licensing fees.

SHORT: ★★★★★ / LONG: TBD



Microsoft's X-Box

Microsoft is the true wildcard because we don't know how much support they will really have. Several of the developers we talked to have plans to port over certain PC or PS2 titles to X-Box, but very few are developing original content. Microsoft better have a strong first- and second-party system in place to secure a constant stream of quality titles released over the first two years.

SHORT: ★★★★★ / LONG: TBD

We bow before the company's ability.

Company: Acclaim

In the Works: *Ali-Sport Baseball 2002*, *Shadowman 2*, *Fallen 200*, *SRC*

Acclaim has big plans for the PS2. With around ten titles in development, the company has something for pretty much every gamer. Acclaim's biggest trump card, however, would have to be the Ferrari license, which gives it the exclusive rights to publish titles based on the Italian car brand.

Company: Suresoft

In the Works: *The Bouncer*, *Driving Emotion*, *Type-S*, *FFX*, *FFXI*

If you look at the history of videogames, the console that has had the support of Square tends to come out on top. Will that also be the case with the PlayStation2? Well, with games like *The Bouncer* and the next two *Final Fantasy* titles coming out over the next year or so, the chances look pretty good.

Company: Eidos

In the Works: *Tomb Raider PS2*, *LOK*, *Soul Reaver 2*, *Blood Omen 2*

At last count, Eidos had around eight games currently under works, the most obvious of which happens to be a new, PS2 exclusive version of *Tomb Raider*. One of the lesser known titles, *Hardy Gurdy*, was originally going to be released on the Dreamcast, but is now jumping ship over to Sony's console.

THE GAMES THAT WILL LAUNCH THE SYSTEM

Sony has not revealed the official lineup for the PlayStation2 launch yet, but it looks like there's going to be somewhere between 20 and 30 titles available. Of those, these are the ones that are likely to garner the most interest and get gamers to plunk down their money.



Madden NFL 2001
 When the Dreamcast launched, *NFL 2K* was its best-selling title. We expect the same for PS2's *Madden*.



Armored Core 2



SSX



Tekken Tag Tournament



Ridge Racer V



Summoner

THE COMPANIES: SONY'S ARMY

When it comes to the console wars, a company brand name is of greatest importance. Just look at how Nintendo built its videogame mascots into characters that are, by recent tests, better known than even Disney's characters.

A company's name can either give it a head start against the competition, or become a handicap from day one. Let's see how the big players match up in terms of company reputation in three areas that really matter: developers, hardcore gamers, and casual gamers.

PLAYSTATION2

► Developers

When Sony first launched the PlayStation, it made an unprecedented effort to woo new developers. Before that time, game makers had been forced to pay huge licensing fees to produced expensive game cartridges. Sony offered the low cost alternative of PlayStation CDs. Developers who made games for the PlayStation enjoyed bigger profits than ever before.

Sony also gave developers plenty of help in making their games. This resulted in a flood of companies abandoning both the Sega Saturn and the Nintendo 64 to create games for the PlayStation.

When Sony introduced the PlayStation2, it had an extremely tough contender in its own reputation. However, Sony stepped up to the plate and offered developers even cheaper production costs, and set up shop to help developers with their first PS2 games.

While some developers have complained about the complexity of the PS2, the overwhelming mood in the development community is support for Sony's console. This is readily apparent in the sheer number of games in development for the PS2. Very few, if any developers are using the traditional 'wait and see' approach to PS2 development. This is because they've developed a bond of trust in Sony.

► **SCORE: ★★★★★**

► Hardcore Gamers

Perhaps because of its relative youth, or perhaps because of Sony's targeting of the mass market, the PlayStation has not received the rabid support of hard-



core gamers. Yes, most hardcore gamers own a PlayStation, but they have not embraced the console with as much fervor as Sega or Nintendo's rabid fans.

However, this is rapidly changing. Because of its phenomenal success, the PlayStation is the home of many games that appeal to the hardest of the hardcore. In fact, within a few years, the number of fans that grew up playing PlayStation games will outnumber those raised on Sega and Nintendo. This generation of hardcore gamers will be loyal to the PS2.

As the PlayStation2 launches with game support in all the classic hardcore gaming genres, it will begin to enjoy the support of the hardcore more than the PlayStation ever did.

► SCORE: ★★★★★

★★★★★

► Casual Gamers

THE DEVELOPER'S CHOICE

We polled game developers to see which system they thought would take the top place in the coming console wars. While all of the developers we polled were working on PlayStation2 titles, the majority were programming for several different platforms—that's why we were so surprised by the results. When asked to rank the consoles in terms of power, for success, over the long term, developers ranked the PS2 at the top. Here's how the voting broke down overall.



* We awarded 10 points for each number-one ranking, 6 points for each number-two ranking, 5 for third, and 2 points for last place.

Since the launch of the original PlayStation, Sony has made no secrets about its plans to target casual gamers. And looking at the unprecedented installed base of the PlayStation, its plans succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

The PlayStation itself has become a cultural icon, and casual gamers associate it with videogames in general. The PlayStation2 will benefit from the 70 million PlayStation owners, many of whom will gladly purchase the sequel to the game machine they're most familiar with. The PS2's name may not be original, but it may very well be the best decision Sony ever made.

Let's also not forget the Sony brand name. Even if you don't count the millions upon millions of gamers who know the PlayStation name, look at how many people are familiar with the Sony brand. Quality Walkmans, TVs, stereos, computers, and other high-tech devices have been building consumer trust for years. The PS2 will certainly take advantage of that.

► **SCORE: ★★★★★**

THE COMPETITION



Microsoft's X-Box

► Developers

While Japanese and traditional console developers have been less than enthusiastic about X-Box, PC gamer makers have embraced the console wholeheartedly. Because its design environment is very similar to the PC, those game makers feel comfortable porting their games and making new titles.

SCORE: ★★★★★

► Hardcore Gamers

Hardcore gamers have little or no attachment to Microsoft in terms of gaming. In fact, the association for many is actually negative.

SCORE: ★★★★★

► Casual Gamers

Casual gamers are very familiar with Microsoft and may trust the name brand when it comes to purchasing a console. However, it isn't quite as easy to find many mass-market friendly videogame franchises that it can rely on for launch.

► SCORE: ★★★★★



Nintendo's Dolphin

► Developers

After years of charging exorbitant fees to developers, Nintendo has built for itself a bad reputation in the development community. Even though the company has promised to lower fees, many developers have already turned to other alternatives. Nintendo's 'Dream Team' developers continue to thrive, however, because of the lack of competition.

SCORE: ★★★★★

► Hardcore Gamers

Nintendo has perhaps the richest history of any console company in terms of game quality. However, its reputation as a kiddie game console has kept it from appealing to hardcore gamers as they mature.

SCORE: ★★★★★

► Casual Gamers

Mario is actually better known than Mickey Mouse, which is a phenomenal testament to the power of Nintendo. However, Nintendo has not been totally as deep a cultural impact in recent years as it did in the past and that recognition will dwindle with time.

SCORE: ★★★★★



Sega's Dreamcast

► Developers

The Dreamcast is home to many wonderful games, however, most of these are from Sega's own development teams. Third party developers have bought into the Dreamcast, however, their support has slowed to a trickle in the wake of the PS2.

SCORE: ★★★★★

► Hardcore Gamers

Sega enjoys what may be the most solid brand following of hardcore gamers. Even though the platform does not have as many games as its competition, the hardcore adore the Dreamcast.

SCORE: ★★★★★

► Casual Gamers

Unfortunately for Sega, the company has not been able to convert its strong hardcore following over to the casual gamer. This is evident in the low worldwide installed base of the Dreamcast. To succeed, a game platform must look in both the casual and the hardcore.

SCORE: ★★★★★

DEVELOPER'S THOUGHTS

We asked PlayStation2 developers what they thought about Sony and why they are developing for the PS2. Their responses were almost unanimously supportive of Sony's new system. Following are some of the more interesting and telling answers. It seems that the PS2 has the support of pretty much every developer out there. Why do you think that is?

"[Developers will support PS2] because every developer knows that it will be successful. Just look at the software penetration in terms of software to hardware ratios, sales volumes for the top selling titles and Sony's market share, and that translates to a no-brainer kind of decision."

David Perry
Founder, Shiny Ent.

"Five years ago Sony brought the first mass market entertainment console namely PS1. The hardware sold over 26 million units in North America. It also allowed a reasonable quantity of games to sell over 1 million units. Everybody considers SCEA able to break the record with PS2."

Francois Lourdin
Senior Producer,
Infogrames

"In one word... Confidence... They have shown that they are aggressive and plan to control the industry. The sales of PlayStation 1 were amazing. They have the complete support of the retailers and the developers at this point. The only risk I see is them underestimating the strength of their enemies."

Mark Burke
Product Development
Crave Entertainment

"At the moment, the PlayStation2 is probably the best machine on the market. Developers are sure to support it. Also, it maintains the same basic elements as the original PlayStation, making it easier to program for."

Kodutsumi-sen
Director, Kessen
KOEI

"Sony has clearly established a strong reputation with the PlayStation. I think there was a general assumption that they could follow this up with the PlayStation2, and if enough talented developers make this assump-

"Sony is a great hardware company to work with. Unlike certain other hardware companies, they are kind to third parties and developers. So Developers want Sony to win."

Jason Rubin
Founder, Naughty Dog, Inc.

tion, it then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Ken Levine
Creative Director
Irrational Games

« Sony makes no bones about it — they want to take over the world. Well, at least your living room, anyway. Sony sees more competition for PS2 coming from TV shows, movies and CDs than from other gaming systems — they're in it to build for your free time as much as your money.



THE FUTURE: SONY'S BATTLE PLAN

One major key to success in the videogame wars is a clear, aggressive battle plan. A look back at past console wars shows us the strategies that guaranteed victory and the ones that insured failure.

Remember how well Sega ambushed Nintendo with aggressive marketing for Genesis and a lineup of killer sports titles? Look at how things shook out in the last generation. Sony conquered with the strong support of developers and casual gamers. Sega turned developers off with the Saturn, and Nintendo was stuck in the past with its cartridge-based N64.

While it's easy to see battle plans in hindsight, it's more difficult to recognize where a company is headed in the present. Let's take a look at what we know about the plans for each game platform...

PLAYSTATION2

► Short Term

Sony's short-term plan is essentially a land grab. The company has already made an impact with developers,

which is evident in the consoles unbelievable launch support.

Sony is predicting that we may see as many as 100 PS2 games as early as March 2001. The company also plans to ship 10 million PS2 units worldwide by the end of the year. Judging by current sales momentum, Sony will sell every unit it can produce.

The short term plan is to become the established market leader before Nintendo or Microsoft even launch their consoles. If Sony can make itself the lead console right from the start, the others may always seem like secondary consoles. So far the plan looks like it's working well.

► Long Term

Sony wants nothing less than total domination of the videogame market, and it has a long term plan to get it. Basically, it's simple: give the three most important sectors of the videogame industry what they want. Developers want a huge installed base, technical support, and a powerful machine to work with. Retailers want big profit margins and games that will sell. Gamers want lots of games at affordable prices. Sony is on track to do all three.

THE CONCLUSION

After spending time talking with countless developers and writing this feature, we can only come to one conclusion. This is Sony's war to lose. If the company continues with its plans and delivers what it promises to the gamers, then there should be no reason why the PlayStation2 should fail. Despite its apparent limitations, the hardware still has plenty of untapped power and potential within it. Games will continue to improve, in all aspects, over the next few years and the problems that are present today will soon be distant memories. Also, Sony's proposed broadband network should be up in the next year or so, allowing millions of gamers to communicate and compete against each other online. It truly will be a future to look forward to. Now, what of Sony's competition?

With the strong buzz and support behind the PS2, Sega is going to have a hard time pushing the Dreamcast. Hardcore gamers have already adopted the system, but it's the casual gamers that Sega needs to entice. That's going to be hard considering that third-party

support is slowing down. Sega, like Nintendo, will have to rely on its own development teams to keep the console alive. Sadly, it's starting to look like the Saturn all over again. Still, the company's plans to take gaming online are very exciting, and should peak a lot of interest once the network is actually up and running. If it doesn't work out, though, Sega is doomed.

Nintendo will launch the Dolphin to much success, with the help of Mario and Pokemon, but the third party support won't be there in full force. Companies are more eager to develop for the sure thing (PlayStation2) and the more powerful console (X-Box), leaving Nintendo to once again drive sales of its consoles alone. If Dolphin sales do soar, however, then companies may shift a bit of focus from PS2 and X-Box development and release titles for it. Despite this, the Dolphin is looking to end up like the N64 — profitable, but not number one.

X-Box is still a wild card in this whole thing. Microsoft, despite being the new

THE COMPETITION



Microsoft's X-Box

► Short Term

Microsoft's short term goal for the X-Box is to establish the console as a contender in both the minds of gamers and developers, and to find exclusive titles to bolster its growing list of PC ports. The jury is still out on both counts.

► Long Term

Microsoft wants to build on its success in the PC market and take over the living room as well. This means that Microsoft must establish the X-Box not only as a PC game port machine, but also a home for traditional console games.



Nintendo's Dolphin

► Short Term

Nintendo seems disinterested in the short term in its plans for the Dolphin. Right now the company has targeted its focus on the wildly successful Game Boy and its successor, and also the company is trying to squeeze as much as it can get out of the N64. Nintendo and Rare are already working on blockbuster Dolphin launch titles, however.

► Long Term

Some feel that Nintendo is content with its current position, and is happy to control a small, but still lucrative section of the videogame market. The company must, however, deliver games that will hold on to the kids that graduated the Nintendo 64. To do this, the company needs to woo back third party developers who've left for more rewarding consoles.



Sega's Dreamcast

► Short Term

Sega is desperately struggling to salvage the future of the Dreamcast. Sega has already tried price drops, rebate offers, and everything else under the sun to make the Dreamcast catch on globally. Unfortunately, it isn't working very well.

► Long Term

Sega must decide whether it can continue to fight with the big boys in the console market, or instead, pull up shop and become a game maker. A follow up to the Dreamcast is already in development, but Sega will be hard pressed to absorb more losses after so many years of rough water.

kid on the block, has plenty of clout and a ton of money. It's also managed to design a console that's both powerful and extremely easy to develop for. Practically every PC developer will end up doing something for the system, and several console-exclusive companies have also expressed interest. The one thing working against it, though, is the fact that the X-Box will probably be the last console released. The PlayStation2 will have a good year head start and the Dolphin should have at least a few months. Dreamcast, if it's still around, will have a well-rounded and robust library of games, as well as an extremely low retail price. It's going to be an uphill battle for Microsoft, but we're sure they're prepared.

While the facts and opinions expressed in this feature seem to predict the success of the PS2, nothing is certain in this industry. No company has ever really dominated two generations in a row. Sony has definitely got a tough fight ahead of it, but it's not one to back down from strong competition. Neither are Sega, Nintendo and Microsoft.



FINAL FANTASY IX

Square's popular RPG series returns to its fantasy roots



When you consider that it's the last Final Fantasy title to appear on the console, Final Fantasy IX seems a bit out of place on the PlayStation. Rather than following the examples set by the last two Final Fantasy sequels, FFXIX leaves the futuristic cyber-world settings behind and has embraced the fantasy themes of the original titles. Basically, it's traded in its hi-tech cities and metal spacecraft for small, rural towns and wooden airships. This change of focus hasn't just affected the areas you visit or the vehicles you ride in, though; it also influences the underlying tone of the game and the look of the characters, monsters and weapons.

New Additions

For the most part, FFXIX plays a lot like the last two sequels, but there are a few differences that require mentoring. Whenever you walk near an object that can be interacted with, an exclamation point appears above your character's head. No longer do you have to just randomly walk around and click on things, hoping that something will happen. If you see the "!", then you know that there's something there worth clicking on. Another interesting addition is the Active Time Event (ATE), which allows you to see events that are happening elsewhere in a town or the world. At certain times in the game, a little box will pop up, telling the player that an ATE is occurring. If the players choose to, they can hit SELECT and watch the event. You can finish the entire game without viewing any of the ATEs, but you'll miss additional info and background details about the other characters.

Combat System

While the combat system, in FFXIX, will seem very similar to Final Fantasy fans, some of the changes may take a bit of get-

ting used to. Actually, there aren't that many new features, just elements taken from earlier FF titles. Turns are still based on the ATB (Active Time Battle) system established in FFXVII and FFXVIII, though. Parties can now have up to four characters in them, and each one can be positioned in the front or back row, depending on their abilities. If a character specializes in spells or long range weapons, it's better to put them in the back where they have less of a chance of being attacked. Speaking of speaking, the job classes from FFV have been brought back as well, which means that characters only learn abilities that they're associated with.

In FFXVII, a character that got hit with a certain number of attacks could perform a Limit Break attack. That's still basically the case now, but instead of a Limit Break, the character goes into a Trance. In this mode, more commands/spells are available and attacks become more powerful. You can tell when a character's about to go into Trance mode by looking at the red meter located at the bottom of their status window.

Guardian Forces

Most players should be excited to hear that a majority of the Guardian Forces are returning for this sequel, as well. Only now, they're called Eidolons and apparently take less time to cast. According to the developers of the game, the list of returning GFs includes Shiva, Ifrit, Odin, Leviathan, Bahamut and Carbuncle. There are probably more, but that's all that they would reveal. We have yet to reach a point in the game where Eidolons are used, so we can't yet comment on what they look like. Next month, we'll give the full details.

Best Final Fantasy Yet?

While not hyped as much as the last two titles, Final Fantasy IX is looking to be the most memorable of the PlayStation Final Fantasy titles. For a long time, fans have wanted the series to return to its fantasy roots. Now, they're getting their wish. Despite the fact that we haven't had a chance to get that far into game yet, we're predicting that this Final Fantasy is going to end up being one of the most enjoyable RPGs to date. Will it be the best Final Fantasy game of all time? We'll let you know soon enough.

Here's a close-up CG shot of three of the game's most characters. They are, from left to right, Vivi Orunitia, Zidane Tribal and Edward Steiner.



4 When you get near an object that you can interact with, an exclamation will appear over your character's head, just like in this screenshot.



4 Gino must be related somehow to Gino. Check out that huge tongue!

EVIL FOREST

After crashing, our lovable characters discover that they're now in the Evil Forest, which got its name because of its lovely deer and lack of any really ugly monsters. NOT! This place is polluted with darkness, and it's going to try and get you in any way it can.



4 The thing about the Evil Forest is that it doesn't look too evil right away. You see spots of sunlight every now and again. Everything looks tranquil... until the killing begins.



4 Venture too far away from your ship and you start to run to enemies left and right. They aren't too difficult to defeat, but you know that things are going to get difficult soon.



4 This is the main boss of the Evil Forest, and the cause of all the darkness you see. Defeat it and you might have a chance of saving the poor little forest creatures... or so you think.



4 Actually, when you do manage to destroy the giant evil plant, things start to go crazy. The forest starts turning to stone, right in front of your eyes. Needless to say, it's time to get out of there.

IN THE BEGINNING...



▲ The game's title screen shows the airship arriving at the city. Everything looks calm and peaceful. Nothing's out of the ordinary. That is, of course, before all hell breaks loose.



▲ After a brief sequence on the airship, the focus of the game shifts over to Vivi Ornitier. He happens to be in the city at the same time, and is trying to get into the church of the play.



Unfortunately, nothing quite works out like it's supposed to, and the ship and its crew end up fleeing for their lives. They barely clear the castle, when the ship crashes into the nearby forest. And that's when the actual game really begins.



▲ After talking to one of the other city dwellers, Vivi manages to find his way into the palace via the rooftops. He sure is determined to see that play.



▲ Eventually, the play takes place with several of the airship's crew participating. Let's just say that it's certainly no Shakespearean production. Real acting seems the norm.



▲ During the play, some of the crew members sneak out in an attempt to kidnap the princess and take her with them. The ironic aspect is that she wants to come along.

THE MIST CONTINENT

The main area that you travel around in is called the Mist Continent, aptly named for all the fog that seems to linger. It's where most of the first part of the game takes place. Unfortunately, we aren't sure how big the overall world of FFX is, so we can't really comment on what percentage of the world this continent takes up. It looks pretty big, though.



▲ With all this mist, it often gets hard to see where you're supposed to be going. We guess that's the whole challenge. Luckily, you still have an overhead map to work with.



▲ The problem is that creatures like to attack adventurers who aren't sure where they're going. You're in for a lot of random battles if you work around for too long.



▲ The info screen has been streamlined a lot since the last game and is now much easier to navigate. You won't see anymore of those confusing, overlapping screens in FFX.



▲ Final Fantasy IX is loaded with different types of adversaries. One of the first ones is this skipper that challenges you to successfully jump over the rope a certain number of times. If you do, you get an item from the girls.



▲ Since she carries a broom around with her all the time, Eiko Carol may be a witch.

▲ While a bit thick-headed, Edward Steiner does his best to protect the princess.



▲ The amount of detail in the backgrounds is staggering. It goes to show you what 300 people, working on a single game, can achieve. FFX just looks breathtaking.

LINDBLUM GRAND CASTLE

This is the last place we had a chance to visit before this preview was due. Sorry, we have a really strict managing editor. Anyway, after arriving here in your ship, you meet up with the King and explain all the events that have happened to you so far. Apparently, he ends up sending you on a special quest.



▲ The castle looks quite intimidating as you approach it. Thank goodness that the inhabitants of it are a lot more inviting and are eager to see you. The King's even friendly.



▲ After a bit of waiting (all royalty seem to be late), you get a chance to see the King and talk to him. He's a pretty short fellow, but he's long on words. Just be patient.

► Since the game is set in a fantasy-style world, you'll find all sorts of strange characters and enemy designs.

ACTIVE TIME EVENT

As indicated in the party view, Active Time Events are either about you or NPCs. Basically, they allow you to view events in different areas and learn more background information about the characters.



▲ If you hit SELECT when the ATE window comes up, you can choose which event you want to watch. After the event ends, the camera switches back your main character.



▲ More so than in most RPGs, the NPCs tend to have informative things to say. A majority still don't say anything important, but a lot will inform you about the town and provide you with useful tips.

▲ A young member of the race of Dark Mages, Vivi Ornitier, picks a pretty good punch as your primary spellcaster.

A LOOK AT THE EIDOLONS

We haven't had a chance to see the Guardian Forces of FFX in action yet, so we can't really comment on them. However, that doesn't mean we can't give you a peek at what they're going to look like. Here are some CG renders of five of the Eidolons, Bahamut and Odin.



ICE CAVERN

If you look at all the places that you have to travel through during the first few hours of the game, there is no location as frustrating as the Ice Cavern. Not only is the boss difficult to defeat, but you seem to get attacked by random monsters every 5-6 steps.



▲ Looking at the outside of the Ice Cavern, it seems pretty harmless. There shouldn't be anything inside that causes too many problems. Right? Wrong.



▲ Sadly, this area of the game perplexes why we tend to hate random battle encounters. You have to fight something like every step, seconds or so. That puts a damper.



▲ The good thing is that the random battles give you a chance to build up your Characters' levels before you have to take on the pain-in-the-butt boss character.



▲ Here's a look at the boss who ended up being the boss of our excitement. We don't know if we were doing something wrong or not, but he was quite difficult to defeat.

FINAL FANTASY IX: OUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Generally, in our previews, we don't like to include too many opinions. That's because the games we talk about aren't completed yet. They're all pretty early, and it's hard to know how they'll turn out. In *Final Fantasy IX*'s case, we had a chance to play the finished Japanese version of the game. And since the U.S. version will be practically identical, we felt justified in providing our first impressions of the first couple of hours of gameplay.



STEVE: While being a huge fan of the PlayStation versions of *Final Fantasy*, I'm glad that the series has headed back to its original fantasy focus. And while the lead characters don't seem to be as memorable as Cloud or Squall, they still are very unique and seem strangely appropriate. Visually, this game is beautiful and beats out both *FFVII* and *FFVIII* in terms of originality and variety. There's just so much to take in. On the negative side, *FFIX* is quite a bit harder than the last two games. I can't even begin to count the number of times that I died in the first few hours of playing. Also, random encounters seem to occur a lot more now, with battles taking place almost every 6-8 seconds. In some areas, it's even worse. It actually gets to be quite frustrating because your characters can't seem to make much progress without taking on some enemies. Let's hope this doesn't occur throughout the whole game, because it would really detract from the overall experience.

RANDY: Up until *Final Fantasy VII*, the series has been influenced more by fantasy rather than science fiction. Since I have always favored the fantasy look and theme, its return is very welcome. The unique blend of blatantly fictional character models, and overall fantastic appearance of towns and other areas with a compelling story captivates me more than realistic, future atmosphere of *VII* and *VIII*. Somehow the other two seem more artificial and less involving. Besides that change, the game seems to be everything we have come to expect: great graphics, music, and gameplay. The only major problem I can detect up until this point is the game's difficulty. Although I may be having trouble because of the language, *FFIX* still seems too HARD!!!



► One of the main characters in the game, Zidane Tribal is your typical, misunderstood hero who just happens to have a tail. Could have been born with him and the princess?



► *FFVIII* unfolds with a dramatic kidnapping of the princess. The irony is that she wants to come along with her own free will.

FINAL FANTASY IX: THE JAPANESE LAUNCH

You haven't lived until you've been in Japan for the launch of a new *Final Fantasy* title. Go to any major shopping area and you'll see a long line of people waiting patiently for their copy of the game. *Final Fantasy IX* drew even larger lines, despite the fact that it wasn't marketed as much as the past two games. Apparently Japanese gamers are really into the fantasy setting, which is probably why the title sold around 2.6 million copies on the first day. In comparison, *FFVII* took about a week to reach that same milestone. Anyway, check out these photos, taken just shortly after the stores opened on launch day.



A Many of the stores had up posters and signs in order to let gamers know that the game was out. We're sure pretty much every gamer knew already.



A Lines like this were commonplace on the day that *FFIX* launched. In fact, they're commonplace anytime a major game is released in Japan.



A As with any RPG, this is the last screen you ever want to see. Fortunately, the save points in *FFIX* are close enough together that you never really have to backtrack that much.



TRAVELING THE SKIES

Since your first airship is destroyed at the start of the game, you're going to have to find another one soon. It's the only way that you can travel around the continent rather easily. The residents of a nearby town are nice enough to loan you theirs, but only because you need it to take the princess to Lindblum Grand Castle.



After rounding up your inventory, it's time to board the airship and take off. It's not quite up to the standards of your first ship, but at least it's in one piece and can still fly.



Take a gander at what your new mobile home's like. It's not quite state-of-the-art, but it can take you from point A to point B without too many problems.



Here's another look at the ship. Using the in-game graphics, granted, it's not as impressive as the *FFVII* sequel, but it still looks pretty good.



After getting off, you'll see a lot of fighting. A character that belongs to the same race as Vivi. For some reason, he throws all the other passengers over the side.



DESTRUCTION DERBY RAW

You better get some insurance

Well, it's been some time, but the Destruction Derby series has finally resurfaced and is crashing its way onto the PlayStation this fall. The third title in the series, *Raw*, packs over 30 different tracks, many of which are designed to get you into huge wrecks, and about 24 different cars, a majority of which are initially hidden.

The challenge, this time, is not just in getting first place in the races, which is often difficult to do, but also in accumulating the required number of destruction points in order to complete each level. These points are awarded each time you cause some damage to the other cars. The greater the damage, the greater the points. The only problem is that when you hit an opponent, you often get damaged yourself. Take too much damage and your car is toast. Game over, man.

Being huge fans of the Destruction Derby series, we were happy to see the inclusion of numerous game modes aside from the straight demolition racing. The classic Destruction Derby is here, along with some new surprises like "Pass Da Bomb", where the object is to be the person without the bomb when it explodes, and "Skyscraper", where you have to



4 Whenever you hit someone and cause them to crash or reverse, you are awarded points. Also, the name of the "trick" that you caused shows up on the screen.



5 While there are over 30 different tracks in the game, you don't have to play them in a linear manner. You have a good deal of freedom in selecting which tracks you want to race on.



6 The AI of the computer-controlled cars is actually quite good and they'll run you if given the chance. Whatever you do, don't get in the middle of a pack of them or you're toast.



4 Pass Da Bomb is a great addition to the game and is especially fun when playing against your friends. The object is to pass the bomb to another car by touching it with your own.

4 Cars get damaged rather realistically. You'll see pieces fly off whenever you hit another car or slam against a wall. Crash too often and you're car won't run anymore.

Publisher THQ
Developer Dark Blue

Release Date Fall
Type Skateboarding



4 Multiple types of grinds will be possible by using the directional pad before landing on a rail.



4 The Survival Mode shuts you off with very little time. You must perform high-value tricks to keep the timer from running out.



4 You'll be able to take around fantasy skaters through the lifestyle mode, building their stats and sponsorships along the way.

MTV SPORTS SKATEBOARDING

THQ gets in on the skateboarding craze

THQ's entry into the burgeoning PlayStation skateboarding category will feature at least 30 pro and fantasy skaters (including the likes of X-Games star Andy Macdonald) with which to tackle the game's 40 indoor and outdoor locations. Your skater will be able to draw from a pool of sixty tricks, which will be *linked to specific control combinations*—the simpler, the better, as the points they result in will earn you money and better sponsorships.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the game, however, promises to be the fact that computer-controlled AI skaters will be competing for points simultaneously with your skater, which means that the possibility for collisions is high. If that's not enough challenge, the game will also boast ten different modes, ranging from Freestyle to a "hot spots"-style Timebomb contest.

With its bevy of sponsorships and licensed music (including Cypress Hill, Pennywise, and others) MTV Sports Skateboarding looks to have the skateboarding culture aspect down pat. We'll find out how the rest of the game holds up



4 In this game's MTV Mode, you'll have to collect all of the MTV logos in a stage before the time runs out.

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SPYRO: Year Of The Dragon

Sony's winged wonder is back — and he's brought friends.

Who would've thought that a little dragon that can barely fly would complete his first adventure, let alone go on to star in two sequels? Now on his third outing, Spyro has a much larger world to explore, new tasks to complete, and a supporting cast of playable characters, each with their own unique (and very useful) gameplay mechanics to learn.

As the story goes, every 100 years, faeries deliver the latest batch of dragon eggs to Spyro's home turf of Dragon Shores, hence the year of the dragon. Only this year, an evil sorceress and her minions have stolen the eggs and spirited them away to the Forgotten World, which lies beneath

Dragon Shores. Spyro's the only dragon small enough to fit through the hole they left, so his role as adventurer is quickly cemented.



▲ These cannons are useful for more than just blasting enemies: shooting ice crystals off these platforms uncovers upgrades to help Spyro reach higher places.

Drawing on this backstory, the game's underlying goal is to collect all 148 dragon eggs and, in the process, hatch the little critters inside — each of which has their own name, look, and personality. You'll earn these eggs by completing a variety of tasks, which range from simple "clear all enemies from the area" affairs to more elaborate puzzles and even mini-

games. Of course, completing this myriad of tasks won't be an easy romp by any means, and that's where Spyro's friends come into play.

As you progress through the game, Spyro will encounter four critters, each with their own special abilities, including a flying penguin, high-jumping kangaroo, gun-toting space monkey, and a Yeti-like strongman. They can all do things Spyro can't, and each will have their own stages to solve. And when Spyro goes head-to-head with the game's mini-bosses, they'll be there to back him up.

That's not to say that Spyro won't have his own share of advantages, though. In fact, in addition to his basic charge, fire, and head-stomp moves, you'll be able to operate machinery, fire cannon turrets, drive vehicles (such as a submarine) and acquire flame, flight, and invulnerability power-ups along the way that are essential to victory.

Promising 37 levels in total and main levels that are nearly four times the size of *Spyro 2*, you can be sure *Spyro: Year of the Dragon* will offer up a sizeable quest. And with all the gameplay additions, it's shaping up to be a much deeper one to boot. The game's slated to hit this October, so fans of the first two (and platform fanatics in general) will want to keep an eye out.



▲ Spyro's back again: this time, he's trying to save all the dragon eggs from an evil fate.



▲ Bentley's ice club can be used to deflect objects, which can then hit enemies and activate switches from afar.



▲ The game's speed rounds have been improved via the addition of speed boosts and rockets that Spyro can fire at enemies.

► As if the normal enemies weren't tough enough, you'll also encounter a number of clever (and powerful) mini-bosses on your quest.

► This swamp level boasts lots of atmosphere and lanterns that must be lit while avoiding flying enemies.



CRITTER CREW

Spyro's not alone on his quest — he's got four buddies to back him up, each with their own unique abilities. You'll have to master them all in order to uncover all of the dragon eggs.



▲ Sheila is a springy-legged mouse-like blemmye whose capable of jumping unusually high and kicking enemies. Plus, she's got big, beautiful, blue eyes.



▲ Penguins can't fly, but *Spyro* can. Not only that, but armed with their rocket launchers and can carry heavy objects between his feet and drop them like bombs.



▲ Bentley's a superstrong Yeti-like beast who can't jump very high, but he can smash objects with his ice club and also use it to deflect projectiles.



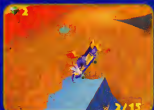
▲ The most useful sidekick by far is Agent 9, a "space monkey" who builds a powerful laser blaster and participates in shiver-like stages. Hey, we love monkeys!

MINI-GAMES

In addition to the various tasks you're assigned, you'll also be able to acquire dragon eggs by successfully completing the mini-games scattered throughout the game. They're accessed via the main game works, so finding them will be an adventure of its own.



▲ The Yek front makes a comeback in this pugilistic showdown, complete with jobs, body blows, hooks, and a fiery ring girl.



▲ One of the cooler-looking mini-games sees Spyro riding off chains on a skateboard with the aid of his wings. Talk about major dirt!



▲ In this mini-game, you hop into a submarine and blast evil ships out of the water. It looks easy, but you have to get a solid lock-on before firing — and these guys are fast.

NEW CHALLENGES



▲ In Cloud City (not the Star Wars one), you'll be tasked with helping three sun seeds reach a cauldron without burning out. Your fiery breath should do the job, but you'll have to keep up with the speedy little guys.



▲ In this world, you'll have to use a series of magical glasses to melt ice walls and dispose of enemies. Ouch!

Sometimes, earning a dragon egg will only require clearing all the enemies out of an area — but most of the time, it'll mean completing one of the tasks the game's vibrant hands you. There are a lot of 'em, and each one a different

GOTTA HATCH 'EM ALL!

The eggs you've got to track down aren't just of the hard-boiled variety. Each one has a little dragon inside just waiting to hatch, and when they do you'll find that they all have their own unique name, looks, and personality — kinda like the monkeys in *Ape Escape*.



▲ Complete a task, and a dragon egg will be presented to you.



▲ Before you can say "over easy," the little guy will pop out and thank you. How cute!

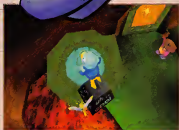


▲ Snake's got a powerful downward stamp that you'll have to use to crush these monster-generating huts. If you don't, they'll just keep on coming.

► There's even going to be a pirate ship-themed level, complete with Rynocs masquerading as ghosts.



▲ Arent it's home turf also doubles as a training course, complete with loads of enemies to blast with his laser pistol.



▲ In this steps, you've got to drop weights on switches and fend off flying enemies while doing so.

▲ Spyro's still got all of his old moves, plus he's got four new buddies to give him a hand.

Don't let her beautiful looks mislead you. She is deadly!

PARASITE EVE 2

Square's Answer to Resident Evil?



The NIMC's airborne, once-fleshy virus enters the body, it begins mutating the organism's DNA, which alters the animal into a monster. Although many monsters are mutated beyond recognition, it appears that everything from people to elephants make an appearance in *Parasite Eve 2*.

Once again, you play the role of the attractive Aya Brea, who must destroy this virus and all of its deadly mutants. To aid in Aya's mission, players are provided with various weapons, such as grenade launchers, machine guns, and pistols. Aya also has eight different magical attacks which can be leveled up with experience points that players receive in battles.

Those who thought that the battles in the first game seemed a little slow, but liked the idea of being able to move around freely, will be happy with the improved fighting interface. The battles feel much more action-oriented, like those found in the *Resident Evil* series. Although RPG purists may think this style strays too far from the standard RPG battle system, the inclusion of magic, experience points, and singular attack patterns for each enemy maintains an RPG feel in *Parasite Eve 2*.

If anything, the fast-paced action adds an element of strategy to the battle system. Since each enemy has unique defenses and attacks, knowing your enemy is necessary to proceed through the game. This



When being charged by a bull mutant in a corner, using magic will help it in its tracks.

doesn't simply involve taking advantage of enemies' defensive weaknesses, but using their attack patterns against them. Although Aya's defensive strategies involve only dodging enemies by running and dodging, perhaps Square could make the battles even more exciting if Aya could interact with the backgrounds. Imagine setting traps, or performing crazy moves from the walls on enemies.

With beautiful graphics, a dark soundtrack, and a decent story to complement some interesting gameplay, *Parasite Eve 2* is shaping up to be a full-blown virus none will be able to resist.

RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY!

Dodging attacks usually leaves enemies open to counterattack. Counterattacking is a useful tactic to conserve ammunition and magic points. Even knowing when to run away from certain enemies may be necessary in order to win later fights.

LOOKIN' GOOD!

The graphics in this game are great; the CG sequences are especially gorgeous. Trust us, the provocative shower scenes are worth it!

► Aya takes a shower! Love her outfit! That Aya can't handle it, is it getting hot in here?



Wow! We have no idea what this thing is, but it looks cool, huh?



► Dodging this mutant dog (or bull!) and letting it knock itself out is the way to victory in this battle.



► Ah-Hah! This one is ugly. These mutants definitely remembered to take their ugly pill this morning.



► Aya takes crap from no one who suits her. These flashes are easily finished off with a machine gun.



► Jax should take a lesson from Aya in Whoop-Ass 101. Now, that's a Faculty.



► This is not the situation to be in. It is usually better to run from the boss they are chasing.



► Here's Aya as a child. Aya's past is important to understanding the storyline. So sure to pay attention to the flashbacks.



► She looks like a typical battle, but a monster may reside behind that face.

► This seemingly exhausted elephant is tough. Make sure Aya is well equipped with a lot of bullets and MP boosters before combat.



► Up to this point, some of the CGs of Aya encouraged very bad thoughts. But a skinny woman is always a turn-off. Thanks a lot for ruining my fantasy! Square!

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INCREDIBLE CRISIS

Step into the shoes of the "typical" Japanese family

Ey far, *Incredible Crisis* is one of the strangest and most unique titles we've seen on the PlayStation. It's got a premise that just makes you sit back and say "Wow!" The game follows the daily adventures of a Japanese family. Only, on this particular day, the family members are having their share of bad luck. Everything that can go wrong seems to go wrong, and it's up to you to make sure that they all make it through the day in one piece.

In order to do that, you've got to play through a collection of different mini-games, ranging from simple hand-eye coordination exercises to more advanced action-based segments. There's even a time when you have to guide the wife through a bank full of armed terrorists. Basically, if you can think of it, it's probably in this game.

The PlayStation is very lacking in the party games department, so *Incredible Crisis* comes as a welcome surprise. It's looking to be one of those titles that you can play over and over again and never get bored. And every time you



play it, we'll bet it brings a smile to your face... or at least a puzzling look.

★ In a scene straight out of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, our "typical" Japanese business man has to outrun a large head-der, which happens to be rolling through his office.



★ The game starts out with a rather simplistic, *Bush-A-Ono*-style dancing game, where you have to hit certain directions and buttons on the beat. Check out these moves!



★ After falling out of a building, you end up on this flag pole and have to make it back inside. Hit the X button at just the right times and you can maintain your balance.

▼ Not all the games are action-based. Some, like this anti-force quiz, will test your knowledge on everything from world history to basic mathematics. How smart are you?



★ This game kind of plays like a *Kanazaki Track & Field* title. You mash the button as fast as you can in order to slow down the elevator. However, you also have move out of the way of incoming debris.

Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO

Release Date: Fall
Type: Action



★ While things get out of hand, it may be prudent to activate your shield. Otherwise, things may get just a little bit "messy".



★ The speed of the pumpkin's fireballs makes dodging these projectiles tough.



★ Listen to your commander in the bottom left corner. His hints are very useful.



★ The chapter's super weapon not only looks cool, but causes serious damage.

ARMY MEN: Air Attack 2

Army Men terrorize toy land!

The latest addition to the *Army Men* series is 3DO's *Air Attack 2*. Already this title seems much more promising than previous installments, with 28 new missions in ten different environments, such as the Japanese Garden, Halloween Night, and Wild West levels. Halloween Night is particularly fun. You must battle fire-breathing pumpkins and attacking enemy infantry in an attempt to rescue the head of a decapitated doll — it seems like *Gears* weren't the only things smoked during the development of this level.

Air Attack 2 also has five new helicopters, each equipped with a machine gun, missiles, and a grappling cable. You can use this cable not only as a means to collect items, but also as a weapon. For example, you can grab a pumpkin and launch it into your opponent! So far, launching various objects at enemies has been one of the more enjoyable new features.

To increase the replay value of the game, 3DO also included tons of chests and a system that allows players to unlock hidden vehicles and chopper capabilities. Although the quality of former games has been mediocre at best, let's hope that 3DO can stay on track and redeem the *Army Men* name.

▼ This game gets quite chaotic with fire coming in from all directions.



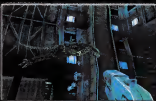
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NASCAR 2001

EA goes round and round... and sometimes to the right, as well

Whenever you climb into a high-powered racing car and turn left a whole bunch of times? Well then, NASCAR 2001 may be just the ticket you're looking for. EA's latest version, due out this fall, features a brand new game engine with enhanced graphics and car physics. But wait, there's more...

NASCAR 2001 will feature 35 active drivers and cars updated for the 2000 season. Each of the computer AI cars will emulate the driving style of its real driver. Dale Earnhardt will dive low into the corners, while Jeff Gordon powers smoothly through the turns. You'll be able to compete as your favorite driver or you can create your own good ol' boy and try to beat Richard Petty's record of seven NASCAR championships. There will also be 19 official NASCAR tracks, as well as five fantasy road courses, set in New York, San Francisco, Hawaii, Colorado and Kansas?

Even at only 85% complete, the cars are beautifully detailed and the tracks, at least the ones that are currently finished, are pure eye candy. Couple this with Single Race and Season Modes, one or two player gaming, and true to life sound effects, and it looks like EA will be sitting in the pole position this fall. We'll let you know more when we hear more. Y'all stay tuned.

► A NASCAR nightmarer: "Hey! What the... Oh real it's a right turn! Aaaaaah! What do I do?!"



► This inside the cockpit view really makes you feel like you're a "good ol' boy". All that's missing is the drink holder...

► The lighting effects are breathtaking. With the sun in your eyes, it's mighty hard to see the next turn.



► The Garage area will allow you to set your car up for each race or for your particular driving style.



► This poor smelly old doesn't know it yet, but he's getting ready to eat my dust...

Publisher Capcom
Developer Capcom

Release Date TBA
Type Action/Platform



MEGA MAN X5

Capcom surprises with a new 2D Mega Man game

Strangely enough, one of the most surprising titles at this past E3 wasn't on the PlayStation2. In fact, it wasn't even 3D. It was the latest sequel in a series that first appeared on the Super Nintendo, Mega Man X5. Yup, the lovable robot hero is back and he's brought along his partner, Zero, too.

While similar to X4 in many ways, this sequel does introduce a few new things to the Mega Man formula. This time around, levels have specific time limits. How quickly you complete a stage will affect the game's ending as well as various other events. You can also create different weapons and weapon enhancements based on the energy you steal from boss-

Zero's weapon of choice is his sword, the evil Sigma better watch out!



es. Oh, yeah. Sigma is once again the main villain and the cause of all your problems. He's diverted an asteroid-based space colony, causing it to be on a collision course with Earth. Now, you've only got 48 hours to intercept the asteroid and prevent the total destruction of the planet. Piece of cake.

Considering we're pretty much at the tail-end of the PlayStation's lifespan, it's nice to see Capcom still releasing games that have that classic old-school look and feel. The platform fans out there are sure to appreciate it. We know we do.

► The amount of detail in Mega Man X5 is quite impressive. Capcom's artists have really outdone themselves this time and given the 2D backgrounds a lot of depth.



► While Mega Man X relies on his Master, Zero likes to use his sword. It doesn't have much range, but it sure can cause a lot of damage. Most enemies are destroyed with just a single swing.



► Bosses come in all shapes and sizes. This is the first one you'll come across in the game. He's pretty easy, especially when you consider that he doesn't even have a body.



► Here's the general menu where you can select which level you want to play. There are eight total worlds, and all must be completed before you can take on Sigma.





SHEEP

This game's baa-d to the bone

Now we've seen it all. Despite having played games throughout our entire lives, nothing could have prepared us for the unique experience that is *Sheep*. This is, by far, one of the most unique and bewildering games we've ever come across. Put simply, the object of the title is to safely direct sheep, through various obstacles, to UFO pick-up points. Now, that sounds a lot easier than it is. The sheep suffer from what the developers call "Artificial Stupidity", meaning they act extremely unpredictably and will walk in front of a harvester at any chance they get.



At later levels, things tend to get a bit stranger. You have to worry about a lot more things, like those giant vegetables. They'll smash your poor sheep flatter than a pancake. Here... sheep pancakes...

Some of the levels can get quite large and have multiple ways through them. In order to help you out, arrows will point out the different ways you can go.



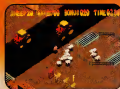
You can't let them out of your sight for even a second, or you'll just end up with Sunday dinner. Yum... mint sauce.

With its simplistic controls and great amount of depth, *Sheep* should cater well to both hard-core gamers and well as the mainstream audience. And we're sure that's exactly what Empire Interactive is counting on. Expect a full review on this innovative title in the near future.

You can earn score points by getting your sheep to perform certain tasks in the levels. Here, something as simple as getting them to jump over hurdles gives you the big score.



A Sheep aren't exactly the sharpest knives in the drawer. In fact, Empire Interactive refers to the little woolly critters' AI as "Artificial Stupidity."



A If you don't pay attention and guide them right, your sheep will end up being run over by something like this tractor. And you just know that they won't appreciate that.



Publisher: THQ
Developer: Radical Entertainment

Release Date: Fall
Type: Snowboarding



MTV SPORTS PURE RIDE

Build a better mountain — and ride it!



A The Specialist mode will let you test your skills at a variety of specialized events, including the half-pipe.



A Free Ride mode opens up an entire mountain for you to wind your way down.

The second snowboarding title from THQ promises something that's sure to extend its replay value. The ability to create and ride your own custom mountain runs. Using the game's editor, you'll be able to place jumps, rails, trees, and other objects on a 2D grid, pop in to check it out, and then adjust everything until it's just right.

In addition to this intriguing option, the game will come bearing a bevy of improvements over last year's offering, including revised controls, new tricks, and 20 new courses. There'll also be four real-world snowboarders to choose from, in addition to several fantasy characters; not to mention 20 authentic snowboards and all sorts of licensed clothing to outfit your boarder with.



A There'll be all sorts of opportunities to jump, grind, and show off your air-borne moves on the game's 20 courses.



A Big Air is another component of specialist mode. As its name suggests, the goal is to rush down a slope and catch the most elevation possible off the curve at the end while doing tricks.



A The creator mountain mode will let you customize your own run, placing trees, rails, jumps, and even semi-trucks on a grid-based mountain blueprint.

You'll catch serious air while playing MTV's Pure Ride.



DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX

Extreme sports with an extreme amount of moves

B MX stunt games are set to explode on PlayStation in the next few months, but up until now we've only been privy to screens of the various offerings in the world. That all changed recently when we got a copy of Acclaim's effort, Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX, in the office for some good old fashioned hands-on gameplay — and so far, we're liking what we see.

The most impressive aspect of the early demo is the trick system, which enables you to mix and match tricks and modifiers (such as "no hands" or "no feet") on the fly to create custom tricks. You could even launch into a No Hander, follow it up with a No Footer, and create a Nothing — you'll completely let go of the bike for a split second. Acclaim promises that more than 1,000 unique tricks can be performed this way, not counting the combos possible when you string them together.

So far, we've seen six of the 12 locations planned for the final version of the game. The famed BMX training ground at Woodward Camp in Pennsylvania offers dirt, street, and vert variations, as does the Greenville facility. Each locale offers its own unique set of challenges, whether they be the strategically-placed ramps of the vert courses or the pools, hills, and walls of the outdoor runs.

► The Greenville vert course will offer plenty of opportunity to catch some major air.

Graphically, the game is also shaping up quite well. The stages all sport a good variety of textures, you can see much farther than in past-generation extreme sports title, and the skeletal animation system used for the riders produces some smooth, life-like reactions during tricks.

Throw in a career mode that'll let you take your chosen rider from rags to (hopefully) riches, and changes their appearance and abilities accordingly, and you've got a mighty tasty recipe. Whether it still tastes as good when the game's completed this fall remains to be seen, but we'll keep you up-to-date with the latest info until then.



MAJOR AIR

You thought ramps were the only way to catch some major air? Think again. On the Greenville dirt course, for example, trampolines are strategically placed to send you skyward if you hit them. You can even bounce from one to the next and perform tricks in between!



► The first trampoline on this course comes right after a gap that must be jumped, and can be used to bounce onto a second trampoline.



► Hitting the second trampoline will send you even higher...



► ...until you're high enough to land along this rail, which is placed atop two telephone poles!

MAKE YOUR OWN TRICKS

By combining Big Air maneuvers that you perform off a ramp, freestyles with next-trick launchers ("no hands" or "no feet"), you're able to create hundreds of new and match-made-of-your-dreams on the fly. They can even be chained together to create custom combos.



► In this case, the rider starts off doing a Superman...



...and transitions to a No Footer, dropping the Superman No Footer.



► Greenville's street course offers such challenges as jay grinding off a rolling end and continuing it along the back of a semi trailer.



► Whenever you execute a big jump, a ruler-like meter appears at the side of the screen to show you how high you've gotten.



► Woodward's famous vert course boasts some of the coolest ramp layouts we've ever seen.



► Most of the game's tricks look risky — this one could mean serious trouble if the rider landed on his bike too hard.

"The most impressive racing engine we've ever seen." -dailyradar.com

"A killer racing experience." -GamePro

"Fantastic graphics, fast speeds, slick cars. Any questions?" -ign.com

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MADDEN NFL 2001

EA looks to field a winning team in an old stadium

This September, Madden football will be coming back to the original PlayStation for what may be its last stand before moving over to the PS2. Does this mean that the team at EA Sports just sat on their hands and took the easy way out? Absolutely not!

Madden NFL 2001 looks great, sounds great, and plays great, even though it's still got a few months to go before its release this fall. EA Sports has pulled out all the stops and added a slew of new graphics and features that will make this game hard to stop. Let's check out the lineup.

Madden's new player models show off a wealth of detail, wristbands, visors, facemasks, turfshoes and elbow pads are included for every player, exactly the way they wear 'em. You'll be able to recognize your favorite offensive linemen by his tape job. EA has also juggled the game physics to make blocks and tackles more realistic. A small DB will have trouble downing a fullback, while quick receivers will easily blow by a linebacker assigned to cover them. Touchdown celebrations were also made player specific, as were the taunts us fans know and love so much.

The players aren't the only ones who got some extra attention. NFL coaches were recorded shouting encouragement to their players, as well as giving the refs some loud "advice" on how to call the game. John Madden is back again, obviously, but this time, his longtime broadcast buddy, Pat Summerall, will be doing the play by play.

Other goodies to be included are a new defensive setup that will allow players to read the offense at the line of scrimmage and adjust pass rush routes, linebacker drops and pass coverage instantly. There's also a two minute drill feature that will allow up to 10 players compete against each other to see who can score the most points.

It's also now possible to collect in-game "Madden cards" by performing certain tasks during a game. These cards can be collected and traded with friends via memory cards. Add in the Create A Team feature, and Madden NFL 2001 is looking to be the main contender in the videogame football league.

With a couple of months to go before the release of Madden NFL 2001, EA Sports certainly seems to have a real winner on its hands. It would take a catastrophic turnover to hurt this long time favorite title.



▲ After a flagrant defensive foul, the offending player usually steps forward to plead his case. "It wasn't me... It was, uh... the evil me!"



▲ The Oakland Raiders take the field and exhort the typically rabid Oakland crowd... or maybe they're just saying "Don't shoot me!"



▲ Madden 2001 faithfully recreates all of the stadiums of the NFL. Just check out the HHMI Metrodome, located in Minneapolis. Locals call it "the Bogy".



► Your intrepid previewer completely ignores the pass coverage and Terry Glenn is off for a touchdown.

THE PLAY'S THE THING



▲ After the ball is snapped, Viking QB Crispepper drops back and starts reading the defense.



▲ Colts receiver Chris Carter, who's almost dropped by a Patriot defensive back.



▲ Carter keeps his balance and tackles on 15 more yards before being dropped by the free safety.

DANCE FEVER

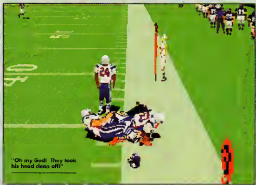
While the NFL has often been called the No Fun League, they'll still allow a bit of dancing after a score. Let's compare and contrast the scoring and dancing styles of two of Oakland's finest — Tim Brown and Ty Wheatley.



▲ Tim Brown's forte is the long bomb, and his dance style reflects that, with the hands in the air motif. A nice downfield block opened up the run after the catch.



▲ On the other hand, running back Ty Wheatley uses a brutal straight arm to open the way for his touchdown run. He celebrates with a simple "Raise the roof" move.



"Oh my God! They took his head clean off!"

Andy Macdonald
 1999 X-Games Gold Medal, Vert Doubles
 1999 World Cup Vert 6 Overall Combined Champion
 World record for Longest Skateboard Jump - 56' 10.75"



Featured Skaters -
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 Rick Howard
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CODE JUNKIES

your complete monthly source for all the newest and coolest playstation cheats

code fix of the month

Nightmare Creatures 2 Level Select And More

If you get stuck while playing the gore-fest, *Nightmare Creatures 2*, you can now easily skip to the next level by using this cool level select we found. This is actually a debug menu that was left in the final game by the developers. Once opened, you will be able to jump levels in the game, but take care in using it, as you can screw up your character's animations and even crash the game. To unlock the level select, go to the Main Menu and press and hold L1 + R2 + □ + ▢ and then press SELECT. If done correctly, the level select will appear in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.

► Enter the cheat at the Main Menu and the level select will appear in the upper left corner of the screen. The top line is the level select which you use 1 and 2 to change the level and press X while highlighting New Game to enter it. The second line is what you don't want to mess with (and doesn't work after either demo runs or you start a game); if you press □ or ▢, the value of the second line will alter your character's animation, making him comically uncontrollable.



Invincibility

We've also come across the all important invincibility code for the game. Once this cheat is entered, you never have to worry about dying and starting over again—your health bar even disappears. To become invincible, start a game and during gameplay, pause the game by pressing START. At the pause menu, press and hold L1 + R2 + □ + ▢ and press SELECT (the same code you used to unlock the level select). When done correctly, the Cheats Menu will appear and will have a Hero Unlimited Live option. Switch this option on and when you return to the game, you cannot die.

► Enter the invincibility code of the pause screen.



Face it—you're a Code Junkie. You need every new PlayStation cheat and password, and you want 'em now. Don't worry, our sources are the best. Stay connected with PSM and your supply will never go dry.

Every month there's usually at least one code in Code Junkies that totally blows open a game or increases the fun factor of a title to another level. Each month we pull out those exceptional codes and cheat gems and award them with the dubious honor of Code Fix Of The Month. Look here for the hottest of the hot codes for the best games each month.



Grind Session Have All The Tricks

Normally you would have to play through the Tournament Mode for some time before you actually unlock all the tricks that your skater can pull off, but now just enter the following code and all the tricks are yours right from the start. To get all the tricks, start a Tournament and pause the game during the action by pressing START. Now on the pause screen, press + + + + + and a message will be displayed to confirm that you entered the code right. Un-pause the game and every trick in the book will be yours to try.

► Start a game in Tournament Mode and pause the screen before you try to enter the All Tricks code. You will see a message indicating that you unlocked the tricks if you enter the cheat correctly.



► Normally tricks are unlocked one at a time as you complete levels in the Tournament Mode, but now you can have access to them all right from the start. After you enter the code, pause the game again and check the trick list for the new tricks.

Glover All The Cheats You Need

The following cheats will definitely get you through the game if you were having trouble before. You will still have to get that ball through some tough spots, but at least now you can keep going without worrying about losing life and starting over. If a level is just too tough, you can now skip it by using the Checkpoint Select cheat. All of the following are entered at the pause screen you can reach by pressing START anytime during gameplay. When you enter a cheat correctly a message will appear with the cheat's name.

► Enter the cheats while the game is paused and as you press the buttons to enter the cheats they will appear along the bottom of the screen.

Cheat	Effect
R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L2, L1, L2	Cheat Menu
R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, R2, L2	Infinite Lives
L2, L2, R2, L2, L2, L2, R1, L1	Infinite Health
R2, R2, L2, L1, R1, R1, R2, L1	Checkpoint Select
R1, L2, L2, R1, L2, L1, R2, R1	Call Ball
L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2	Disable All Cheats

► When a code is entered right you'll get a message like this.



Alundra 2 All The Puzzle Pieces

Hidden throughout *Alundra 2* are puzzle pieces, 60 of them to be exact. There are some to find in just about every level and mini-game and it can be quite the chore to collect them all. Thankfully we've been able to put together the following lists of where each one can be found. The first list shows how many puzzle pieces there are in each area and the second list details their exact locations.

Area	Puzzle Pieces
Mt Sparrowhawk	1
Bombed Poco Village	1
Kindra Forest	3
Tortuga Beach	1
Torolodo	4
Ox Tank	5
Howling Cave	1
Dun Webb	4
Yagin Harbour	1
Puerto Medusa	4
Milenas Mansion	4
Gwabe Town	5
Seagull Ruins	5
Eden	1
Eden Ruins	5
Poco Village Ruins	1
Church Of The Key	3
Turnkey Dam	1
Mount Fredraka	1
Dragonica	3
Varuna Ruins	3
Star Key	3

Exact Location of Puzzle Pieces

- Kindra Forest along the path Prunewell came from
- Mt Sparrowhawk Alexia gives you one
- Poco Village Bombed explore the debris
- Tortuga Beach along the wooden veranda
- Torolodo from the Cow Princess
- Torolodo in the back of the Inn
- Torolodo by Lord Jeehane's shrine
- Ox Tank in piston room
- Ox Tank in the upper level with the flame throwing Mephastoids
- Ox Tank in the bushes outside
- Dun Webb over the pit by the first save point
- Dun Webb conveyor belt room
- Dun Webb in the elevator shaft behind the green door
- Puerto Medusa Gold Badge Testing Center first room
- Puerto Medusa " " next room
- Milenas Mansion in the garden shed
- Milenas Mansion two rooms past the Knockkodie
- Milenas Mansion on the balcony
- Gwabe Town next door to the store's second floor
- Gwabe Town in Jose's House
- Gwabe Town in Linda's House
- Puerto Medusa in the Catch The Falling Vase mini game
- Seagull Ruins solve the freiball launching blue statue puzzle

- Seagull Ruins in the dungeon with the statue on your head puzzle
- Seagull Ruins shoot the four invisible lanterns
- Seagull Ruins in large room with black and bomb puzzle
- Eden Village in the shed on the island
- Eden Ruins in dungeon with gold statue and spikes on same platform
- Eden Ruins next room down in the pit
- Eden Ruins in the pit drop down from L shaped walkway
- Eden Ruins in the pit next to the grapes by the gold statue and the crystal puzzle
- Eden Ruins in the gold statue maze
- Poco Village behind the doorway on the hill
- Dog Mini Game behind gold statue
- RC Car Mini Game in circuit A
- Gwabe Town in the town hall behind two gold statues
- Church Of The Key under gold statue
- Church Of The Key under stone statue in the lava river
- Church Of The Key on a ledge by the trees
- Mt Fredraka by teleports in a dead end
- Dragonica in the invisible sentries room
- Dragonica on the high platform after bomb block corridor
- Dragonica in the flame thrower puzzle room on the ledge
- Gwabe Town in Sues House use all your rings here
- Torolodo in the Bull Waiting area shoot lantern
- Yagin Harbour in the Inn light the lantern
- Ox Tank burn the trees down
- Ox Tank shoot the three green crystals
- Ox Tank shoot invisible block under the large cannonball
- Dun Webb enter the top door outside by the rolling balls
- Seagull Ruins jump down in the pit and light the six lanterns. The pit is located to the far right in a room with gold statues and spinning sentries
- Turnkey Dam a Puzzle Piece is hidden behind the entrance
- Puerto Medusa Gold Badge Testing Center inside a gold statue
- Milenas Mansion light the unit lantern in the bed room
- Varuna Ruins in room with two green statues and line of torches
- Varuna Ruins in the room where the chests keep falling down when you kill the creatures it's the last chest to fall down
- Varuna Ruins past the invisible spinning blades on the ledge
- Star Key south door solve the four switch puzzle
- Star Key in the room with bomb throwers and statue
- Star Key jump over the spiked platform from the ladder

tip lines

Need help on a game? Then call the people who made it. For your convenience, we've gathered the following list of tip lines for PlayStation game publishers. Most of the numbers are 900 toll calls, so be warned—they will cost you. If you are under 18, you should get permission from whoever pays the phone bill before calling. Also, we don't maintain any of these lines unless they are our own, so the users are responsible for the information available on them.

Acclaim	(516) 759-7800
Accolade	(900) 454-HINT
Activision	(900) 680-HINT
American Technos	(408) 453-9828
ASC Games	(203) 665-0032
Ascii	(900) 288-2724
Atlus Software	(714) 862-2351
Bandai	(310) 926-0947
Capcom	(900) 680-2583
Crystal Dynamics	(900) 737-4767
Data East	(900) 454-5435
Eidos	(900) 773-4367
Electronic Arts	(900) 288-4468
Fox Interactive	(900) 225-5436
GT Interactive	(970) 522-1797
Hot-B	(415) 568-9501
Interplay	(714) 553-6655
Jaleco	(874) 215-1811
KOEI	(415) 348-0500
Kokopell	(900) 370-HINT
Konami	(900) 896-4468
Lucas Arts	(900) 740-JEDI
Maxis	(510) 933-5630
Microprose	(900) 773-HINT
Midway/Williams	(903) 874-5092
Mindscape	(900) 737-4468
Namco	(900) 737-2262
Ocean	(408) 289-1200
Playmates	(714) 428-2112
Psygnosis	(900) 976-4468
Ready Soft	(905) 475-4801
Sony CEA	(900) 933-7669
Sierra	(900) 370-5583
Spectrum Holobyte	(800) 665-GAME
Square Soft	(900) 407-KLUE
Strategic Simulations	(408) 737-6800
Technos	(408) 453-9828
Tecmo	(310) 787-2900
THQ	(900) 370-HINT
Time Warner	(408) 473-9495
Trimark	(310) 392-3243
Ubi Soft	(800) UBI-SOFT
Viacom	(303) 739-4019
Virgin	(900) 288-4744

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LETTERS

welcome to the premier forum for PlayStation fans, where we dig into today's hottest issues



▲ Only Bill saw the strange, sinister spacecraft as it dropped out of warp...

With all this talk about the new PS2, the only thing that I can think about is the Dreamcast for Sega. That's right! I don't give a damn about the over-hyped PS2. What's really going to change the gaming world is the Dreamcast. And I really find it hard to believe that any gaming publication hasn't picked up on the significance of this. So let me spell it out. First of all, I've been a loyal PlayStation owner for years and I have some great memories playing games on my PlayStation. But let's face it, after years on the same console, it comes time to move on. So when the PS2 was announced, I was ecstatic. It was more of what I loved, but with next generation graphics. In fact, I read so many articles gushing over this amazing new machine that I began to grow tired of my old PlayStation. It's the same old thing that gamers go through every few years when all the next generation consoles

come out. We're forced to compare our beloved, dusty old console to these new and improved systems. And over time, with much hesitation, we put aside our old games to embrace the new generation of games.

But wait, PS2 has backwards compatibility! So anytime I want to play my PlayStation games, I can, right? Wrong. The backwards compatibility thing seemed great at first, but when you think about it's really pointless. Next generation games create next generation gamers. After spending hours playing 128 bit games, do I really want to pop in my 32 bit game? As much as I love my old games, I can't bear to play them anymore. The same will be true for my PlayStation New games bring new expectations and change our tastes. It's already happening to me. After playing the Dreamcast and the new arcade games, I'm starting to find

my PlayStation games ugly. Which brings me back to the Dreamcast.

The Dreamcast is a gamer's dream. For the first time in history, I can play my old games on a different console with next generation graphics. The thought alone makes me all misty eyed. Imagine playing Tekken 3 or Gran Turismo 2 or any other game that you love and cherish as a brand new game. Well, not completely brand new, but with graphics far better than when you played them before. This concept is astonishing. With Dreamcast, my old PlayStation games now have new value. And let's

not forget that I can pick up all those PlayStation games that I've been meaning to buy (many being only 20 dollars) and play them like they were PS2 games.

When the Dreamcast was announced, I realized that as a PlayStation owner, I had been gipped. Sony fed me so much hype, that I didn't see it before.

Sure, they offered backwards compatibility, but why not improved graphics? I assumed that it just wasn't possible. I figured backwards compatibility was as good as it gets. Then all of the sudden, Dreamcast makes it possible to play Sony PlayStation games on a Sega Dreamcast with improved textures and graphics! After all, Dreamcast is an outside company and they made it possible. Why couldn't Sony make it possible for their own systems? Before I felt crazy

Drop us a line at PSM Letters, care of Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA, 94005. Or even better, if you have access to e-mail, you can reach us at psm@imaginemedia.com.

with anticipation for the PS2. Now I say screw Sony and their damn 300 dollar PS2. They've let me and all other PlayStation owners down. And soon, more and more of us will begin to see this. When the PS2 are sold out, myself and others will be playing the Dreamcast with our old PlayStation games with an extra hundred dollars in our pocket. Sony had better take notice to the implications of Bleem's release. Think about the average gamer. Do they really want to drop over 400 dollars for the PS2 (including games and another controller) when they can buy a

Dreamcast for 200 dollars (with a 200 dollar online rebate) and have the ability to play 20 PlayStation dollar games with PS2 graphics? Hey and let's not forget PS2's problems with anti-aliasing.

I've seen Bleem's images of Ridge Racer IV on the Dreamcast and I didn't notice any jaggies. The same that next generation consoles change

our expectations of games, Bleem will change our expectations of a next generation console. Unless Sony can come up with a program similar to Bleem for its PS2 (and fix those damn jaggies) then they will lose many PlayStation loyalists to Sega.

Proset Frazee
PKFrazee@aol.com



▲ While attractively packaged, Bleem! is still no substitute for a PS2. Sorry, Proset.

Want to hook up with other gamers from around the world? Drop us a postcard with your name, address, favorite game, your current fav, PS2 Link-Up, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Or you can e-mail us at psm@imaginemedia.com.

Bo G., age 13
rgb@earthlink.net
Favorite Games: RPGs: Adventure, Action
Favorite Games: Final Fantasy VII, Final Fantasy VIII, Legend of Legaia, M77, Soundbringer, Star Ocean: The Second Story, Gundam
Quote: "PS2? They rule."

Josh, age 14
1941king@hotmail.com
Favorite Games: Top: Survival Horror
Favorite Games: Every Final Fantasy and Resident Evil, Chrono Trigger, Lunar, SSSC
Quote: "I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, DO NOT FORGET IT"

Jorge Pina, age 26
jorgepina@earthlink.net
Favorite Games: RPGs, adventure and fighting games
Favorite Games: Resident Evil 1 and 2, Driving: Gran Turismo 3, World Gear, Sold and Castleswain SOTN
Quote: "God bless videogames"

Jason Vign, age 17
Okidogem@earthlink.net
Favorite Games: RPG, fighting, action, and racing games

Favorite Games: FF7, R.A.S.S., Persona, Zelda and the just, Crazy Taxi and Wipeout XL
Quote: "I'm looking for a hardcore girl gamer, where are you?"

Kaelin Mitchell, age 11
Skidoo@aol.com
Favorite Games: survival, horror, adventure, sports, action
Favorite Games: Metal Gear Solid, Legend of Zelda, Tekken, Final Fantasy 8, Twisted Metal 2, Dino Crisis, Castleswain SOTN
Metal 2, Dino Crisis, Castleswain SOTN

(Continued on page 98)

PAUSE

Each month, we put the controller down for a moment to focus on a different aspect of PlayStation gaming. We invite debate, so please drop us your opinion on this month's topic at PSM PAUSE, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Or, you can e-mail us at psm@imaginemedia.com (just be sure to put "Pause" as the subject heading). We will run the best of your responses here in this section.

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

Would we be better off with just one system?

Look at posts on the 'net, and you'll find countless debates over which videogame system is "The Best." It seems like everyone has a single favorite system (usually the one they own), and for a lot of people, that system can do no wrong. Very few people online appear to be truly free of any bias, and everyone has their own opinion on what Sony, Sega, Nintendo and Microsoft are doing right and wrong.

So, that got me thinking about this month's Pause question: Would we be better off with a single, unified videogame format? One system that plays all of the games? Before you answer, consider the benefits and negatives of both sides.

If there was just one console, every developer would know exactly what to program for, and they could really focus on pushing that hardware to its limits. Gamers would only have to buy a single system and they could play any game they want. Just think,

you could play Zelda, Metal Gear, and Sonic for the price of just one console. Plus, there'd be a lot less bickering over "who's the best!"

On the other hand, competition can be a very good thing. Without different hardware manufacturers pushing each other, would we see everyone's best possible effort? Would Nintendo still put out

Triple-A games like Mario and Zelda if they didn't need them to sell hardware? And, can't it be argued that there is an inherent excitement in not knowing which system will be number one? In our industry, there's no more dramatic storyline than the rise and fall of hardware companies.

What other advantages and disadvantages of having a single platform can you think of? Which way do YOU think would ultimately be the best?

Please send me your thoughts at the addresses above, and I'll print as many of your responses as I can fit in Pause (try to be brief, and remember to include your name!).

CHRIS SLATE

THERE'S NO MORE
DRAMATIC STORY-
LINE THAN THE RISE
AND FALL OF HARD-
WARE COMPANIES

PAUSE FEEDBACK: JULY WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE E3 SHOW?

Here are your responses to our Pause topic for issue 35 (July, 2000). It was tough trimming down the tremendous amount of letters we received to the few that follow, so we tried to pick ones that took a slightly different angle to the subject. Now let's see what you had to say...

From what I could gather, Sega had the better "show." However, what happens when you take away all the bells and whistles? Sega's booth would have been about as flat as two-month old root beer. Sony unquestionably had the better games. Just look



1. The PlayStation AND the PS2 were being shown. The longest surviving console and the most anticipated console make for a deadly team in my opinion.

2. For a good while, Sega will be the only competition Sony has, and PS2's first-generation titles look just like Dreamcast to the tenth power.

3. With games like *Soul Reaver 2*, *Tekken Tag*, *Madden*, *Fusion GT*, *Motor Mayhem*, *Oni*, *Bounce*, *GT 2000*, and (gasp!) the greatest game ever seen in the history of the world, *Metal Gear Solid 2*! Oh no! *Halo* breaks out the *Metal Gear*! Stop the match!

All in all, E3 was everything I'd hoped for and then some. Hell, Sony could launch the PlayStation 2 with *Tekken Tag* and *GT 2000*, and it would sell faster than half-priced Pokemon cards on a Saturday. Not to mention that Sega had, like, two anticipated games. Nintendo hasn't even shown what its system looks like, and nobody knows crap about the X-Box. Basically, if Sony just follows through with what was seen at E3, they're still pretty right now.

Don Roberts
DON_28011@earthlink.net

E3 in my opinion was the most exciting one to date! The PS2 was in full force with a fantastic lineup of games, and the Dreamcast was showing that it's still the little box that can, and it will be interesting to see how Sega remains in the game once Nintendo and Microsoft enter into it. PlayStation had a few good games, but I could care less about the PS1 at the moment. Nintendo, on the other hand, had a few good titles as well. Can you imagine what next year's E3 will be like, since by then you will have everybody's console in the game? The new Millennium is just beginning for the videogame industry!

Cody Maverick
cody_maverick@hotmail.com

I'm a longtime gamer, and through the years I've seen various mags cover E3. The show always has a few games that catch my eye, but this year takes the cake. I was absolutely stunned by the multitude and quality of the games. With titles like *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Sons of Liberty* and *Tony Hawk 2*, you can't go wrong. I seriously think that *MGSS2* will be the best game ever and that they had so many shots of it was amazing. I think that Sony and all the other game companies will be hard pressed to top this year. The buzz behind PS2 just adds to the atmosphere of a great gaming year to come! WHOOOPEEE!

Mark Grabus
(email withheld by request)

Sony was absolutely destroyed by Sega at E3. No matter how many units PS2 has sold in Japan in its first four months, that doesn't change the fact that the line-up of software is laddered, and that's putting it nicely. While the console may have two games from Namco that are above average (but don't match Namco's or Sega's attempts on Dreamcast),

two games don't make a console. As for E3, the games shown were either those lockstep titles which were already available in Japan (i.e. *External Ring*, *Evergreen*, *Driving Emotion Type-S*, et al) were playable. The only games that were looking half-way decent were *The Bouncer* (which still hasn't been shown in "playable" form), and I use the term loosely, *MGSS2*, *Sons of Liberty* (which is due out in about 18 months), and *Dark Cloud*. As to how they'll play, or if they'll even look as good as they did (I caught *MGSS2* coughing) is yet to be seen. However, Sega had a booth filled with games that weren't just SEQUELS, but were actually somewhat original.

I'm sure PS2 will come into its own a few days down the road, as did the PS after a few initial bumps, but to blatantly be over Sony dominating E3 is just plain wrong.

SoulMger
SoulMger@aol.com

► CHRIS: Let's look at PS2's launch lineup. You've got great original titles like *SSX*, *Time Splitters*, and *Silent Scope*. There are a few other good-looking titles in the pack as well, and yeah, a few duds, too. But overall I really believe this will be one of the best launch lineups ever.

As for Sega, I agree with most of you that they did a tremendous job in presenting their lineup. Overall they've got a lot of decent software, but not a single game that I'd have to run out and buy a Dreamcast to play.

I DO think that Sony has a fight on its hands. However, it's a fight that they're poised to win. If anyone's going to take 'em out, it will take a MASSIVE effort and a little bit of luck. That's just common sense.





(Continued from pg. 95)

► **RANDY:** You're right — next-generation games do make next-generation gamers... and PS2 will have true next-gen games aplenty. And with the likes of *Dark Cloud*, *GT2000*, or *Metal Gear Solid 2* to look forward to, no one can tell me that they're going to be popping in their old PS1 that often. People are primarily going to buy PS2s to play new games, not re-visit their old ones, though it will be nice to be able to play all of your game library on one machine should you choose. Not to mention the support for all of your existing peripherals.

Sure, the idea that Bleemcast will enhance the visuals of your old PlayStation games (well, at least the ones it supports) is great, but it's not going to magically infuse them with next-generation gameplay. They'll look dramatically better, but they won't play any different — and that's the real promise of PS2 games. In the end, they'll be the same old games you've undoubtedly played through more than once, and how many times can you keep playing the same game (even the likes of *Metal Gear Solid*) with higher-res graphics, especially when there are new PS2 games that blow your old stuff out of the water in terms of the actual gameplay experience? You can't tell me that you're going to take a spruced-up MGS over the tremendous gameplay innovations offered by MGS2, no matter how good the original game was (and still is).

As for Bleemcast making PS1 games look as good as PS2 games, you must've been looking at the wrong PS2 games. Trust me, when you see games like *Madden*, *SSX*, or pretty much any of the US-developed launch games running,

you won't be able to say that they look like enhanced PS1 games — or in these two instances, Dreamcast games. Oh, and about the whole debate surrounding PS2's supposed "shortcomings," I just got done seeing a US launch game that features fully implemented anti-aliasing and utilizes 10MB of textures per frame by swapping between system memory and the Graphic Synthesizer's on-die cache. That's two myths dispelled, thank goodness.

First I would like to say that your magazine rocks! And I have a couple questions to ask:

1. You said that some accessories for the regular PlayStation would work on the PS2. Will you be able to use the regular PS converter so you could play old Japan titles on the PS2?

2. In one issue, you mentioned a headset for the PS2 which you would communicate with the game through. Does it really exist and if so, are there any titles lined up that would be compatible with it?

Collin Barr
cbl_cbl@hotmail.com



▲ Dreamcast has Seaman, a game featuring voice recognition. PlayStation doesn't have anything like that currently.

► **STEVE:** Hey, Collin. How's everything on your side of the world? Excitement is building here in the PSM offices, since the PS2 launch is ever so close. There's only a few

H-HEY, THAT'S MY CUB! AT LAST! LOOK OUT LADIES—HERE I COME!

now it's the

Hey guys! I just got my July issue of PSM and had a couple comments that I thought I'd share

First, I'm a hardcore gamer, and I'm a girl (although a tomboy). I'm actually heading into a career in the videogame industry. I'm not a feminist or a girl who insists on spelling "girl" as "gril", but the "Swimsuit Special" irked me. I know that I'm a minority in the gaming universe, but it's a bit annoying to see people like me ruled out completely. Although it was nice to read the little passages on the side of each picture and see how well the girls are respected, how many people will go to that section for that purpose? It's like the popular excuse of "reading Playboy for the articles." I'm not saying to make a swimsuit special starring the guys in videogames, but it'd be nice to have something that shows a little recognition to the girl gamers out there. I'm tired of all the other magazines out there who seem to think that the only games girls like are games like Hello Kitty's puzzle game, the Spice Girls game, or anything pink and related to Barbie. I know I'm not the only one who feels this way, and I know that it's every girl gamer's dream to have a girlfriend who doesn't scoff at him when he goes to stand in line a day in advance for a new system or shell out \$50 for

a new game (but I'm taken)

By the way, is there any light of hope that PS2 games will have the option of having the original Japanese voices? I HATE dubbed over voices with a passion and I refuse to buy any game that has that. Luckily, I'm Japanese, so I can understand the original dialogue from import games. Even subtitles would be good. Since most anime DVDs has both language options, isn't it possible for games to do this too?

Rumi Onna
megam@anime-goddess.com

► **CHRIS:** Well, we tried to throw a couple of guys in the Swimsuit Feature, but we have to be realistic. As much as we value and respect our female readers, they only make up roughly 3% of our audience — hunk in trunks is the LAST thing the other 97% wants to see. So, please don't feel like we're ignoring you or not respecting girl gamers — we're just trying to please the majority of our audience!

As for games keeping the original Japanese dialogue, I don't think it will happen. I wish it would, and with the added space available on a PS2 DVD, it's possible — I just don't see US publishing houses going for it. I hope I'm proven wrong!

Quote: "Gals are better!"

► **Sage Moody,** age 20

in323@yahoo.com

Favorite Games: *Superman* and *Action* or *Adventure* games.

Favorite Games: *Metal Gear Solid*, *Madden 2001*, *Scooby-Doo* and *Capcom* games.

Quote: "Can't forget the bonus Doh!"

► **Raid Nieves Jr.,** age 18

4230 Carpenter Ave.
Brentwood 10445 apt 2

Favorite Games: *Fighting*, *RPGs*, *Adventure* games.

Favorite Games: *Final Fantasy 7*, *8*, *Dragon Ball Z*, *Legend of Zelda*, *Final Bout*, *ALL METAL*, *Street Fighter*, *Perfect Dark*, *MARVEL*.

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FAN ART

Welcome to the Fan Art section! Each month we'll be taking a look at the coolest PlayStation fan art from the hottest new talents around. If you've done an illustration that you'd like to see printed here, then by all means send us a copy! (We'll take originals too, but we won't be able to return them!) Address to: PSM Fan Art, c/o Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, California 94005. Even better, if you have the art in a high-resolution digital format, e-mail it to us at psm@imaginamedia.com, and label the subject heading "Fan Art." Now get busy!



4 Pipin Tobing is a rising star in the fan art circle — this guy's incredible!

5 Thanks to 417 reviews for sending in this sultry shot of Felicia.



6 For more great art from Wils Jans, check out <http://penelopeshears.home.comcast.com/index.html>.



7 Joe Feliciano and Felipe Smith out of Chicago sent in this sweet SF piece.



8 Topham turned in this smokin' Bush-A-Groove illustration. Nice job!



9 Don't worry, Mr. Snoogey (Mr. Snoogey?). Motor Mayhem will be released one of these days. We'll let you know when.

wouldn't expect *Motor Mayhem* to be out anytime close to PS2's launch. Nevertheless, we'll keep on bringing you all the dirt on it we can!

viruses on the internet. And since the PS2 will be able to go online eventually, is there a chance that the PS2 could fall prey to a virus? Is there any way to avoid them?

Mendee Tsolmon
wu-mendee@wu-lang.net

► **RANDY:** You know, I can't turn on the news anymore without hearing about a new computer virus making the rounds. Thankfully, they all primarily target Windows-based computers, and someone would actually have to write a virus designed to attack PS2 specifically for it to do any damage. Plus, you'd really have to be using the PS2 hard disk drive and somehow get the virus onto it (or into memory) for it to cause any damage. Seeing as the PS2 network won't be online for a while, it's not anything to be concerned with near-term, and proba-

bly won't be a major concern even in the long term.

1. I simply can't live without knowing if Sony will make a *Legend of Dragon* two. Please say the rumors are true!

2. What about *Legend of Legasus*? People never give it as much credit as it deserves because are biased towards the FF series.

3. Is there going to be an *Ape Escape* two? If not, I'm gonna say one word: PPLLEEEZZZE!



► Let's not start worrying about viruses until we can get online with our PS2s!

1&2: Metal Gear Solid: Final Fantasy VII, DeusEx, Z. Lendings, Breath of Fire III, Tenchu
Quote: "I love the first disk of FF7 it's under 17 hours. Let's see you do that!"

► **Jacin Mann**, age 13
jacm@world.com

Favorite Games: Mesh Combat, and Action Adventures

Favorite Games: Memories Digital Mission VFX-2, Armoire, Con, Amoral Conakob, VFX-2 of Kan, 304 Beaver

Quote: "Winning leads to advancement, it also means playing me."

► **pasport**
pasport@equi.net

Favorite Games: RPG, Adventures, Action, Survival

Favorite Games: FF 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8
 Chrono Trigger & Omega, Legacy Of Kain, Samurai Warriors, Xenogears, Golden Eye, Army Men, Metal Gear Solid & VR Missions.

► **Cody Mawardi**, age 16
cody_mawardi@hotmail.com

Favorite Games: All

Favorite Games: Final Fantasy 2&3, Castlevania SOTN, Legacy of Kain: S&P, Resident Evil Streets, Castlevania Series, Tekken 2&3, Xenogears, MGS: Goldwind Series, DOOM/DMZ, Legend of Dragon, CONTRA 3, Alien Wars, Super Minotaur, Super Pinpoint, Zoids 64, and Salsalot!

Quote: "Only then can you judge me.O.H.I.D!"—Kain, Soul Reaver

► **Migo Master Cole**, age 17
migomastercole@hotmail.com

Favorite Games: RPG, Fighting, and Puzzle

Favorite Games: Legend Story, You Don't Know Jack, and RPG Maker

Quote: "A full clip in every gun, a drain in every floor, and me."



smart bomb

MISTAKEN IDENTITY



I have one more thing to say. I look boys butts in arcade games. But I much prefer RPGs, seeing as I love Medieval times and that I think dragons should rule the world. After all, they can't make more of a mess in it than we have!

Kendal
K_onye@juno.com

► **CHRIS:** 1. Nothing official on that yet, but I think you can bet on it.

2. Sorry, no word on a sequel to *Legale* yet.

3. It looks good — we know for sure that the *Ape Escape* team is working on a couple of new games that focus on the DualShock controller, and there's a good chance that one of them is a sequel to *Ape Escape*.

I'd like to start off by saying that you guys are the greatest PS2 magazine in the world! Anyway here are questions relating to the upcoming PS2, the already here PS, and some goofy questions I was just curious about.

1. Will the PS2 support VCDs like they're going to do with DVDs?

2. Can you transfer old memory card data from your old memory card to the new memory cards? If so, how much more space would you have left?

3. Do you guys know what the word *Gekido* actually means?

Charles Label
cluckmin@hotmail.com



▲ Double our hands on look at E3, not much is known about *Dark Cloud*. Adam, it sure looks pretty, though...

► **STEVE:** We love goofy questions... bring 'em on.

1. The PS2 won't support VCDs out of the box. However, that doesn't mean that a company couldn't create an add-on that allows the console to play VCDs. In fact, I'm sure one will.

2. Not really. PlayStation games can't recognize the PS2 memory cards anyway.

3. According to our man in Japan, Max Everingham, *Gekido* means drama. Interesting, isn't it?

Hey guys, your mag has the most in-depth coverage of PS2 I have seen. I love it! First off, what's the situation for as Gabe Logan would say, the set region on *Dragon Quest VII*? I saw a quick preview of it in several places. Will it hit U.S. shores? Secondly, have you gotten any more news on *Dark Cloud*? It looks to be a promising RPG/god sim, but I haven't seen anything besides your coverage on it. And it is soooooo tempting... Third, is there a given time for when the Sony Broadband Network will be initiated. I saw how FFX looked, and wondered when online games will

come to the PS2

Adam H.
Highland Mills, NY

► **CHRIS:** *DOVI* is definitely coming over, but no date is set (look towards next year). Detailed info is still scarce on *Dark Cloud*, but from what we've seen and played, it will be well worth the wait. It could be out as early as the end of this year. Sony hasn't given any official timeframe regarding their online plans, other than "next year" sometime.

Great mag an' all but I was wondering a little something about how far the console industry is going, especially Sony with the PS2. With all the bells and whistles coming with the Playstation 2 like USB ports for keyboards, mice and digital cameras or the console having a hard drive and an operating system, and not to mention a modem, what's there to distinguish a console from an actual PC with a TV out cable? I think it's great that technology is advancing at such a massive rate but soon enough I think people will wake up and understand that a computer can be upgraded to "get with the time" but a console will just fall back eventually. What do you think about it?

Andres Onu
king@tangman-key.com

► **RANDY:** The fact of the matter is that PS2 (and all consoles, for that matter) is a

closed architecture — i.e. they have one set of specifications that never change. This means that developers can spend all their time learning how to take advantage of the hardware and can be certain that their games will work the same on every machine. PCs, on the other hand, are generally all different in one way or another, so developers never have one target to aim for in terms of maximum performance. This means you'll rarely see developers making the most of what the PC has to offer, simply because they want their games to be able to run on the widest variety of systems possible.

I reserved a PS2 and my TV doesn't have an AV connection. Will they make an RFU adapter or will I have to buy a new TV?

Frank brumherhop
brumhop@bellsouth.net

► **STEVE:** In a word, yes. There will be an RFU adapter for the PlayStation 2.



▲ Since Sony had an RFU adapter available for the original PlayStation, there's no reason to believe that it won't do the same for the PlayStation 2.



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PSM
Small April 1998 Advance

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PS2 PRE-LAUNCH SPECIAL

The PS2 is almost here!!! We've got just one more month before the big U.S. release, so next issue you can expect mega coverage of the hot new system. We'll have a pre-launch guide, packed with all the info you need to get ready for the big event, such as: the final launch game lineup, our "must-buy" recommendations, our analysis of the U.S. unit and much more!

2

PARASITE EVE 2

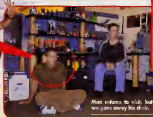
We've been a little thin on the strategies the last couple issues, but next month we'll be back on track with an amazing blowout of Parasite Eve 2! We'll show you where to find every item, solve every puzzle and unlock every secret of this hot new sequel!

PS2 SPORTS GAME BLOWOUT!

All the latest on EA Sports' smokin' titles, like Madden 2001, plus your first look at 989 Studios' PlayStation2 launch lineup, including FaceOff, GameBreaker and GameDay 2001! Which football franchise will take the early lead on the PS2? We'll get a good idea in just 30 short days!



Alas, another fine issue of PSM has come to an end. As we say goodbye, here are a few parting shots...



▲ An hour later, Emergency Medical Technicians arrived and convinced E8 to let go of the Pepsi.



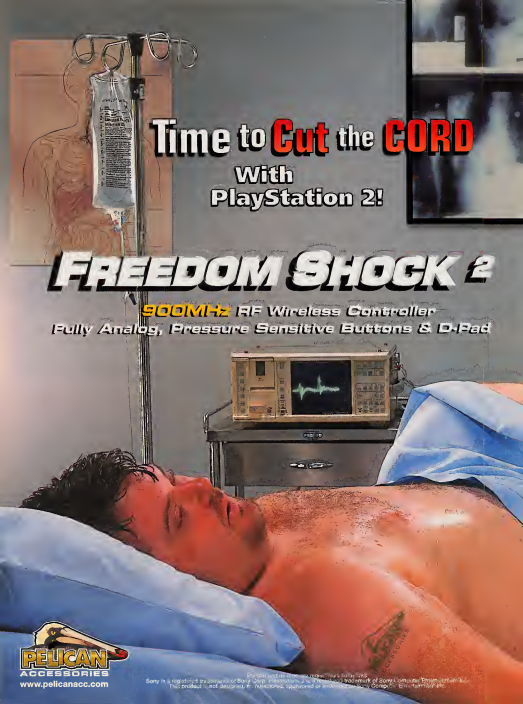
▲ Above we see Randy proudly posing with his toys. To the left we see Editorial Director Matt Finner's reaction to such an impressive shrine of Geonkoo.

SHINY! CUT IT OUT NESTER, THAT DOESN'T GO IN THERE!

▲ At first we thought Randy's puppet set was funny, and it became an obsession...

ARE... ARE YOU SAYING I SHOULD KILL AGAIN?

P



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